

PART II: METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES OF KRIYA YOGA

Disclaimer

The techniques described herein are exposed for study purposes only and should serve as a comparison with the works of other researchers. The author hopes this work will inspire intelligent feedback. Any remarks, criticism, corrections, and/or additions are welcome. Before you begin posing all kinds of questions to yourself, read through Part II and Part III of this book so you have a thorough understanding of the matter. You'll find that as you go through it many questions will be answered.

In my opinion, certain delicate techniques e.g. Maha Mudra, Kriya Pranayama, Thokar, and Yoni Mudra require the help of an expert to check their execution. Each person is different so it is not possible to predict what effects an intensive practice might have on a particular individual.

The author disclaims any responsibility in case of negative results, especially if the techniques are practiced without first having their execution checked by an expert. Those who intend to carry on this practice should do so with a due sense of sacredness and awareness of the wealth it can bring to their life. Although you should have the right and the duty to control your own destiny, securing expert counsel or guidance is indispensable.

When you go to an expert, please advise them of physical problems, such as high blood pressure, lung problems, or signs of hyperventilation If you have a particular physical problem or handicap, an expert can lead you through a very mild form of Kriya Pranayama and the corresponding Mudras – and if necessary, may recommend that you practice them only mentally. ¹

¹ To check if refinements have been added to the description of the techniques, visit www.kriyayogainfo.net at least once a year.

CHAPTER 6

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – FIRST PART

INTRODUCTION

The techniques of *Kriya Yoga* are explained in Part two and Part three of this book. Here you have an overall vision of the seven chapters involved. The first thing that stands out is the distinction between Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* and Swami Hariharananda's *Kriya*.

Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9: Lahiri Mahasaya's Kriya Yoga

This is the *Kriya* that I have always sought. It's a *Kriya* that in my opinion originates from *Tantric Hatha Yoga* and from particular discoveries made by Lahiri Mahasaya himself. Sufi mystics with their *Dhikr* make a huge contribution. This *Kriya* is a set of very effective methods. If you want a practical guide to metabolize them, utilize chapter 12.

In chapter 6 the basic technique of *Kriya Pranayama* is introduced. In chapter 7 you find the description of all the techniques which are traditionally part of *First Kriya*. In chapter 8 we introduce the *Second*, *Third* and *Fourth Kriyas*. This is altogether the art of *Thokar*. In chapter 9 we introduce the *Fifth* and the *Sixth Kriyas*. This is altogether the art of *Tribhangamurari* movement.

Chapter 10: Swami Hariharananda's Kriya Yoga

This *Kriya* is influenced by the *Radhasoami* movement. Entering the *Omkar* dimension plays a predominant role. The information contained in this chapter can prove to be very useful.

Chapter 11: Discussions with students of PY Correspondence Course

Kriyabans who live in the love and loyalty to PY can find here, material to understand the reason why PY decided to make some modifications toward Lahiri Mahasaya's vision. PY's *Kriya* path has an unprecedented simplifying power. If the mind of the reader is open, a very important understanding will happen.

Chapter 12: A Good way of experiencing the beauty of Kriya Yoga

This chapter contains what I presently recommend for approaching *Kriya Yoga*. I utilize my personal experience to envisage a good plan of practice. The chapter starts with a very simple and effective way of introducing the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*. Simpler than what we describe in chapter 6 or in chapter 10. The teacher who gave this long-awaited inspiration is Sri Mukherjee. But we don't stop to that first step, we are delighted to visualize

a complete *Kriya* path which can be practiced with similar simplicity and effectiveness.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN CONCEPTIONS OF KRIYA

A) LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA VISION

First Level

The first level of this *Kriya* is grounded on the technique of *Kriya Pranayama*. Normally each session opens with a short preparation and ends with a phase that many call "Meditation" but it would be more correct to call "*Pratyahara*" that means "withdrawal of the senses." After this transition phase, a *kriyaban* is open to a dimension that is beyond the mind.

In the first level we achieve the melting together of the energies *Prana* and *Apana*. A particular state happens in our consciousness. Lahiri Mahasaya calls it *Equilibrium*; it is situated half road between the awareness of the external reality and the awareness of the internal state of peace.

Before starting the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*, the *Nadis Ida* and *Pingala* are partially blocked and the *Prana* has difficulty to flow. Through this condition of *Equilibrium* the state of *Prana* in the body changes. It becomes possible guiding our *Prana* in the subtle channel of *Sushumna*.

A good signal that the breath has become "subtle" is given by a particular realization: during the exhalation we feel that our breath doesn't go out of the body through the nostrils but travels within, filling with fresh energy the cells of the body.

In the first level, the obtainment of *Kechari Mudra* is undoubtedly of great value since it creates perfection in *Kriya Pranayama* and calms enormously the functions of the mind. Other events can happen during the months or the years when you one is busy with the first level. Other procedures come in handy, even if they are not, because of inexperience, used in every aspect of their power.

Second Level

In this level we consider a very subtle work upon the *Chakras* and a strong work upon the heart *Chakra*. The *Chakras* are not an obstacle, we do not want to entertain here any negative concept of them. But we know that our

duty is not only to awake them but go beyond them. This is the real meaning of the *Second Level*. We shall utilize the power of *Thokar* which is directed toward the heart *Chakra* – this will happen also in the *Third level of Kriya*, in greater dimensions.

In the *Second Level*, the mental pressure of *Prana* upon each *Chakra* becomes stronger. A positive transformation is noticed in the practice of *Kriya Pranayama (First Kriya)* which becomes more solid.

Third Level

The *Third level of Kriya* is devoted to the practice of *Thokar* using a long *Kumbhaka* (holding of the breath.) Here a *kriyaban* exerts a very great action on the *Chakra* of the heart. Knowing that the heart is the place in the body where the traditions says that the immortal Self resides, some schools of *Kriya* consider this as the last level of *Kriya*. They don't know other levels of *Kriya*.

There is no doubt that through a great, long, work with this *Third Level of Kriya* no other technique is necessary. There is a strong connection between the heart *Chakra* and *Kutastha*. The bright point (*Bindu*) that appears in the heart *Chakra* during the practice of the *Third level of the Kriya* is the same reality that appears as a white star in the center of *Kutastha*. Entering the star of *Kutastha* crossing the so-called "tunnel of eternity " or entering a deep state of ecstasy that is expressed as the "contemplation of the uncreated light in the heart" (typical expressions of the *Hesychasts*) embody the same event.

Fourth Level

Do you want to improve at the maximum the practice of the *Kriya Pranayama*, while the attainments regarding the *Chakra* of the heart remain unaltered? Then you must practice the *Fourth Level of Kriya* where *Thokar* is applied on all the *Chakras*.

It has been said that if you create a great impact on the *Muladhara Chakra*, *Kundalini* comes up and crosses the center of the heart bringing its potentialities to the maximum expansion. In that state our breath is totally internalized, therefore *Kriya Pranayama* is practiced in a state very similar to the breathless state. This must be kept present when we face the mysterious reality of the *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Fifth level.)*

Fifth Level

At this level, those who accept the teaching of Satya Charan Lahiri (one of the grandsons of Lahiri Mahasaya) focus their attention on a descending energetic flow moving towards *Muladhara*, but remaining outside the spine. What happens by perceiving such current is difficult to express because we have no words to describe a reality which is beyond mind. This

level is a prosecution of the previous level but seems to belong to another word.

Sixth Level

The door of the spine is opened. Now we can meet the subtle transcendent *Omkar* reality in the aspect of micro movement sensation. I do not venture to indulge in rhetoric quotations of ancient holy writings. I can only say that through this procedure we become able to leave the dimension of time and space and reach the highest *Asamprajnata Samadhi* which leads to *Kaivalya* state.

B) SWAMI HARIHARANANDA'S KRIYA VISION

First Level

Practically speaking, this is the stage in which, mainly through simple procedures (among which a great place is given to *Forward Bendings* and *Maha Mudra*), a *kriyaban* succeeds in perceiving the astral sounds, light and a moving sensation inside each *Chakra*, while the perceptions of the external world diminish in power. Through the daily repetition of this form of meditation, *kriyabans* enters the channel of *Sushumna* deepening their contact with the *Omkar* reality.

Second Level

This level is more mysterious, because in it we dissolve the obstacles represented by the *Tattwas* (five elements.) By referring to the well known theory of the five elements, we understand that our duty is to dissolve the deceptive reality that is at their basis. We must reach the realization that every aspect of the physical reality is made of one only substance: the Spiritual Light. The five *Tattwas* (earth, water, fire, air, ether) are an illusion.

Working with this ideal in mind, a *kriyaban* drives the *Prana* from the body toward the spine and inside the spine. Through the help of concentration, utilizing also a particular tool like the repetition of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet on the "petals" of the *Chakras* and on different parts of the body, the *Prana* gets sucked in the upper part of the head. A *kriyaban* enjoys an ecstatic state and is ready for the last work that happens in a new dimension having its seat in the upper part of the brain and over it.

Third Level

In this level a work is started to pacify the *Prana* in the crown of the head. Some movement of the head are still necessary.

Fourth Level

In this level, immobility in the whole body, head included, is established. A deep concentration, that gradually becomes effortless, happens in the five parts of our head: frontal, left, back, right and under Fontanelle.² Then the mind is lost and the estatic state ensues.

Fifth Level

A simple instruction is given to reach the perfect breathless state. The awareness of a *kriyaban* is not only on the calm *Prana* in the body but also over the body. A new center over *Sahasrara* is revealed. The mind is lost in the divine Light, over *Sahasrara* and gradually comes down in *Cerebellum*.

Sixth Level

There are two ways of describing this level. One is to say that we reach the *Brahma Randra* which is the subtlest aspect of *Bindu* – a place beyond time and space. Another way is to say that we reach the abode of the spiritual Light of God which is in the *pineal gland*.

Conclusion

In Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* we work to bring the Light of the Spirit in all the parts of our being. Each *Chakra* is awakened, each *Chakra* is considered spiritual.

In Swami Hariharananda's *Kriya* we find a tendency to escape from what in Lahiri's *Kriya* is considered a duty: to face our human nature and live more in the heart and less in the brain. In Swami Hariharananda's *Kriya* we don't find that huge work upon the region of the heart. There is the tendency to move the center of our awareness in the higher regions of the astral dimension.

In both paths we have wonderful procedures to reach the region situated in the highest part of the brain where we can experience the dimension of great, deep peace. Our heart is full of inexpressible joy. But this joy becomes alienation if is not supported by a work upon the heart and, finally, upon the basic Chakra Muladhara.

It is inspiring to read the words that Lahiri Mahasaya has left in his diaries.

² To locate such point, raise the chin, focus your attention where the divine Light seems to originate.

"The breath is normally externally oriented. If, through the practice of *Pranayama* it is made internally oriented, then it is possible, through the technique of *Thokar*, to open the door of the internal temple. With a forceful impact upon the *Anahata Chakra* the door opens. A deep engrossment occurs and this state becomes stable for a prolonged period. By achieving this state the mind becomes saddened by seeing the suffering in others." (*Lahiri Mahasaya*)

This sentence is the summary of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* with its different phases. After obtaining the perfection in *Pranayama* it is possible to obtain the fruit of *Thokar*. The door finally opens and... "the mind becomes saddened by seeing the suffering in others." The promise of Lahiri Mahasaya is to become one with humanity [you cannot become one if you do not feel the suffering in other human beings.]

Identifying the *Sahasrara Chakra* with our supreme goal means to follow a refined illusion. Reaching the *Brahma Randra*, or the pineal gland... does not mean having achieved our final goal but only an intermediary phase. The true destination is the "Uncreated Light" (so said the Hesychasts) in the region of the heart. The obsession about always holding the mind in the *Sahasrara* region has produced people full of Ego that have lost contact with the reality of the life and have become fix in behaviors and theories that are the caricature of the spiritual path.

In my life I made the choice of refusing living in *Sahasrara*. I said a total yes to Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya*.

SPIRITUAL ANATOMY

● *Location of the Chakras*

The *Chakras* are subtle astral (ethereal) organs inside the spinal cord; ideal steps on a mystic ladder guiding one safely to the deepest ecstatic experience. In *Kriya Yoga* it is not as much important to visualize a *Chakra* with petals, with a *Bija Mantra* in its center, with a *Yantra*... and with all you can find in New Age books, as to perceive approximately its location. The practice of *Kriya Yoga* refines this perception.

When certain particular conditions are established – mental silence, relaxation, an intense aspiration of the soul – the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* takes, so to say, the "inward route" and the Spiritual Reality manifests. You will then perceive, in the astral dimension, the reality of the *Chakras*. You will be able to listen to their astral vibration as well as hues of light pouring forth from their locations. The practice of *Kechari Mudra* (explained in chapter 7) fosters this experience, especially when the "wind" of the breath subsides.

The nature of each *Chakra* reveals two aspects, one internal and one external. The internal aspect of a *Chakra*, its essence, is a vibration of "light" attracting your awareness upward, toward the Spirit. The external aspect of a *Chakra*, its physical side, is a diffuse "light" enlivening and sustaining the life of the physical body.

Now, while climbing the ladder of the spine during *Kriya Pranayama*, you can conceive the *Chakras* as tiny "twinkling lights" illuminating a hollow tube which is the spinal cord. Then, when the awareness is brought down, the *Chakras* are internally perceived as organs distributing energy (coming from the Infinity above) into the body, enlivening the part of the body which is in front of them.

The first *Chakra*, ***Muladhara***, is at the base of the spinal column just above the coccyx (tailbone) region. The second *Chakra*, ***Swadhisthana***, is in the sacral region, halfway between *Muladhara* and *Manipura*. The third *Chakra*, ***Manipura***, is in the lumbar region, at the same level as the navel.

The fourth *Chakra*, ***Anahata***, (more simply called heart *Chakra*) is in the dorsal region; its location can be felt by bringing the shoulder blades closer and concentrating on the tense muscles in the area between them or just

below them. The fifth *Chakra*, ***Vishuddha***, is located where the neck joins the shoulders. Its location can be detected by swaying the head from side to side, keeping the upper chest immobile, and concentrating on the point where you perceive a "cracking" sound.

The sixth *Chakra* is called ***Ajna***. *Medulla oblongata* and *Bhrumadhya* (the point between the eyebrows) are strictly related to *Ajna* and can not be considered as separated entities. *Medulla* is considered the physical counter part of *Ajna Chakra*. What matters is that by finding stability of concentration in any of the three points, the spiritual eye (*Kutastha*), a luminous point in the middle of an infinite spherical radiance, appears at the interior vision. This experience is the royal entrance to the spiritual dimension. Sometimes the term *Kutastha* is utilized at the place of *Bhrumadhya*.

In order to locate ***Medulla***, at the top of the spine, raise your chin and tense the muscles of the neck at the base of the occipital bone; then concentrate on the small hollow under that bone. *Medulla* is just anterior to that hollow.

Moving from the seat of *Medulla* toward the point between the eyebrows, it is not difficult to locate the seat of ***Ajna***: swing slowly your head sideways (a few centimeters left and right) having the sensation of something connecting the two temples. The seat of *Ajna Chakra* is the intersecting point of two lines: the line connecting the seat of *Medulla* with the point between the eyebrows and the line connecting the two temples.

The energy flowing through the tip of the tongue during *Kechari Mudra* stimulates the **pituitary gland**. The pituitary gland, or hypophysis, is an endocrine gland about the size of a pea. It forms a protrusion at the bottom of the brain hypothalamus. It is worthwhile clarifying this because a famous *Kriya* school counsels to focus on this gland in order to obtain the experience of the spiritual eye.

The same school emphasizes the role of the **pineal gland**. This is another small endocrine gland in the brain. It is shaped like a tiny pine cone (symbolically, many spiritual organizations, have used the pine cone as an icon). It is located behind the pituitary gland, at the back of the third ventricle of the brain. Having full experience of the white spiritual Light after long concentration upon the pineal gland it is considered the last action that you do to perfect you meditation before being lost in *Samadhi*.

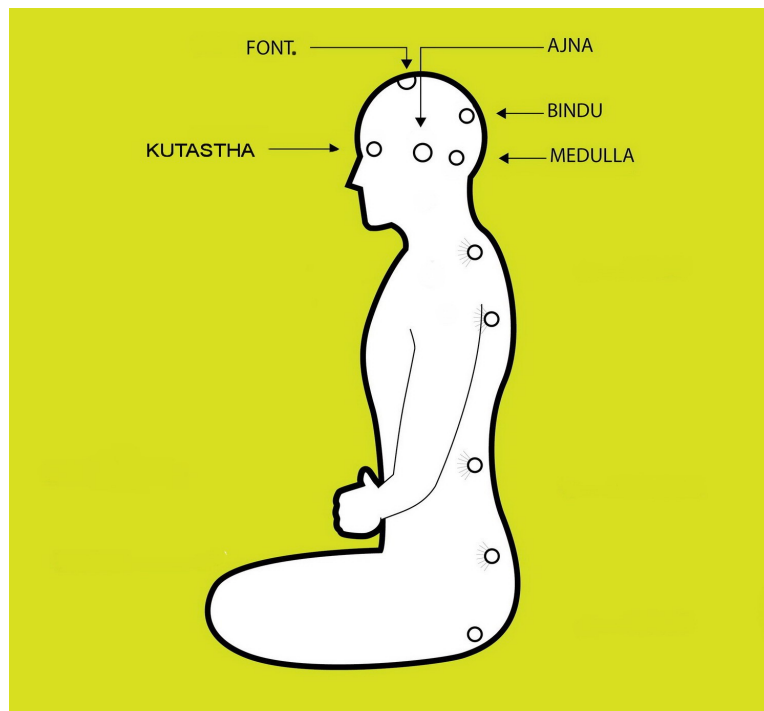


Fig.1 Location of the Chakras

In the commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by Swami Pranabananda Giri there is a hint to two further spiritual centers in the brain: **Roudri** and **Bama**. *Roudri* is located on the left side of the brain above the left ear, while *Bama* is located on the right side of the brain above the right ear. We shall have the opportunity to utilize them during the practice of those *Higher Kriyas* that happen in the upper part of the brain.

Bindu is located in the occipital region and is not considered a *Chakra* in itself. However it is a very important spiritual center because it works as a door leading the awareness to **Sahasrara** – the seventh *Chakra* located at the top of the head. *Bindu* is located where the hairline twists in a kind of vortex (This is the *Sikha* point where the *Hindus* leave a lock of hair after having shaved their head.)

In order to become aware of *Sahasrara* some schools counsel to focus on **Fontanelle** [the anterior fontanelle more properly called "Bregma".]

The **eighth Chakra** is the highest center we are going to consider. It is located at about 30 centimeters above *Fontanelle*.

- *Position for Meditation*

One should sit facing east. According to Patanjali, the *yogi's* posture (Asana) must be steady and pleasant.

Half-lotus: Most *kriyabans* are relaxed in this sitting position, which has been used since time immemorial for meditation, because it's comfortable and easily managed. The key is to maintain an erect spine by sitting on the edge of a thick cushion so the buttocks are slightly raised. Sit cross-legged with the knees resting on the floor. Bring the left foot toward the body so its sole is resting against the inside of the right thigh. Draw the heel of the left foot in toward the groin as much as possible. The right leg is bent at the knee and the right foot is comfortably placed over the left thigh or calf or both. Let the right knee drop as far as possible toward the floor. The shoulders are in a natural position. The head, neck, chest, and spine are in a straight line as if they were linked. When the legs get tired, reverse them to prolong the position. The best hand position is with fingers interlocked as in the well-known photo of Lahiri Mahasaya. This balances the energy from the right hand to the left and vice versa. The hand position for meditation and for *Pranayama* is the same because you move from *Pranayama* to meditation without interruption. Usually you don't even realize it. For certain health or physical conditions, it may be beneficial to practice the half lotus on an armless chair provided it is large enough. In this way, one leg at a time can be lowered and the knee joint relaxed!

Siddhasana: (Perfect Pose) is of medium difficulty. The sole of the left foot is placed against the right thigh while the heel presses on the perineum. The right heel is against the pubic bone. This leg position combined with *Kechari Mudra* closes the pranic circuit and makes *Kriya Pranayama* easy and beneficial. It is said the position helps one to become aware of the movement of *Prana*.

Padmasana: (lotus position) a difficult, uncomfortable position; the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh with the soles of the feet turned up. It is explained that when this *Asana* is combined with *Kechari* and *Shambhavi Mudra*, it results in an energetic condition that produces the experience of the internal light coming from each *Chakra*. It helps keep the body from bending or falling over as it tends to do when deep *Pratyahara* is practiced. *Padmasana* is uncomfortable for a beginner because the knees and the ankles become extremely painful. I would not advise anyone to perform this difficult posture; some *yogis* have had to have knee cartilage removed after years of forcing themselves into the *Padmasana*.

KRIYA PRANAYAMA

[I] *Deep breathing with throat sound*

Start the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*. Assume your favorite meditation position. Sit facing East. From now onwards you can utilize the trick described previously sitting on the edge of a thick cushion so the buttocks are slightly raised. The chin is little down, near the chest (your neck muscles maintain an even slight tension.) Your fingers are interlocked like in the well-known photo of Lahiri Mahasaya. Mouth and eyes are closed. Feel that the center of your awareness is located at *Medulla* while the inner gaze converge effortlessly on *Kutastha*.

Inhale deeply through the nose producing an unvoiced sound in the throat (like in *Ujjayi Pranayama*).³ To make certain the sound is correct, concentrate only on increasing the friction of the air flowing through your throat. A muffled sound will originate. Increase its frequency. If the surroundings are perfectly still, a person could hear it within a 4-5 meter radius – by no means outside it.

Kriya Pranayama is to be practiced with a deep abdominal breathing. This means that, during inhalation the upper part of the thorax remains almost immobile while the abdomen expands. Shoulders are not raised. During exhalation, the abdomen comes inside. Count the number of breaths utilizing a *Mala* [rosary beads] or the fingers. To start, you will practice 24 breaths. In time you will increase by 12.

[II] *Mentally chant Om in each Chakra. Enjoy the breathing process.*

During inhalation, *Om* is mentally chanted (or, more simply, "mentally placed") in each one of the six *Chakras* from *Muladhara* to *Medulla*. During exhalation, *Om* is mentally chanted in the *Medulla* and in all the other *Chakras* coming down to *Muladhara*.

Don't lose the focus of your inner gaze on *Kutastha*. It is clear that going up and down the spine producing the throat sound and at the same time placing *Om* in each *Chakra* is difficult. However, Lahiri Mahasaya wrote

³ The sound of inhalation is similar to the amplified background noise of a loudspeaker – a quiet *schhhh... /f/*. There is only a slight hiss during exhalation. The perfection of the sound will be reached through *Kechari Mudra* proper. The sound of inhalation will be very subtle, while the exhaling sound will be flute-like: *Sheee Sheee* [ʃi:].

that going ahead without chanting *Om* in each *Chakra*, your *Kriya* becomes "tamasic" [of negative nature] and many kinds of useless thoughts arise. Therefore try to calm yourself and get this result.

Have a deep breath, then another: don't worry about the length of inhalation and of exhalation. (After some breaths you discover that your breath lengthens naturally.) Enjoy the beautiful feeling of fresh air that seems to come up through the spine and pierce each *Chakra*, enjoy the warm exhaled air permeating each zone of the body from top to bottom. You actually perceive this. This is not a figment of your imagination! Merge your awareness with the beauty of this deep breathing. ⁴

A short pause between inhalation and exhalation and between exhalation and inhalation comes naturally. The pause do no last more than 2-3 seconds. Each pause is a moment of comfortable peace.

[III] *Perceive the energy moving through the spine*

After some days or weeks of regular practice, during inhalation, you will perceive a cold current coming up through the spine – or simply a diffused fresh sensation. During exhalation you will perceive a lukewarm sensation in the spine. Exhalation could be longer than inhalation. During the last part of the exhalation, there is a clear perception of the navel moving in toward the spine. By refining this experience – being more aware of the navel moving inward and of the action of the diaphragm muscles – you will feel an ecstatic sensation.

[IV] *Listening to the sound like a "flute" of the breath*

Make the sound of the breath subtler and subtler. The exhalation arising in the nasal pharynx has a fine sound like a faint whistle. Symbolically speaking they say it is the "flute of Krishna". Lahiri Mahasaya described it "similar to blowing air through a keyhole". He explained that this sound has the power to cut out any external distracting factor including thoughts, Therefore he says it is: "a razor which cuts off everything related to the mind".

In order to have an idea of it, take a whistle, blow, diminish, diminish until it is barely audible. Consider an empty perfume sample, without cap. Close one nostril. Put the opening of the sample under the open nostril and have a long but subtle exhalation. Move up and down the sample

⁴ Reference literature says that perfect *Kriya Pranayama* is 80 breaths per hour – about 45 seconds per breath. A beginner is far away from reaching such rhythm. For a beginner if each breath lasts 20 seconds, this means that the practice is very good.

experiencing all the variations of the produced whistle sound. At a certain point you will obtain a fantastic whistle and say: "This is it"

This sound is produced in the upper part of the nasal pharynx. If you feel it you have only one duty more, letting that this sound absorbs your mind completely.

[V] *When you cross the number of 48 repetitions of Kriya Pranayama, move the focus of your awareness from Kutastha to Fontanelle*

If you decide to face this situation, you can, from now onwards, after about 4x12 repetitions of *Kriya Pranayama*, move the center of your awareness into the upper part of your head. *Kriya Pranayama* is to be practiced by adopting a specific *Mudra* which is an evolution of the classical *Shambhavi Mudra*. Let us learn it.

Shambhavi Mudra is the act of concentrating on the space between the eyebrows, bringing the two eyebrows toward the center with a slight wrinkling of the forehead. Now, there is a higher form of *Shambhavi* that requires closed or half-closed eyelids. (Lahiri Mahasaya in his well-known portrait is showing this *Mudra*.) The eyes look upward as much as possible as if looking at the ceiling but without any head movement. The light tension perceived in the muscles of the eyeballs gradually disappears and the position can be maintained rather easily. A bystander would observe the sclera (white of the eye) under the iris because very often the inferior eyelids relax. Through this *Mudra*, all one's *Prana* collects at the top of the head.

The practice seems to have a life of its own. You will eventually have the impression of crossing a mental state, which is like falling asleep, then suddenly returning to full awareness and realizing you are basking in a spiritual light. It's like a plane emerging from clouds into a clear transparent sky.

Remark

This practice is a real jewel, it embodies the quintessence of Beauty. Time goes by without much notice and what could seem to be an exhausting task turns out to be as easy as a moment of rest. However we must remember that to practice of *Kriya Pranayama* with a strong concentration on the upper part of your head is not appropriate for a beginning or medium level students. Developing a strong magnet in *Sahasrara* is the most powerful way of stimulating the *Kundalini* awakening. This implies acting on our

Subconscious Mind bringing to the sphere of consciousness some contents that we are not able to assimilate. The person who experience this, especially if she/he is far from emotional maturity, might experience an entire range of negative moods.

CHAPTER 7
LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – SECOND PART
(Completion of the explanation of First Kriya routine)

The practice described in the preceding chapter is unique, you won't find another similar with regard to beauty and sweetness. Now, to add something (*Maha Mudra*, *Navi Kriya* and *Yoni Mudra*) has in itself a slight probability to damage this idyll. You know, traditional teaching of the *First Kriya* includes these three practices. Usually *Maha Mudra* and *Navi Kriya* are a good preparation to the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and *Yoni Mudra* is practiced at the end of your routine. Other arrangements are not only possible [everything is possible: life is yours] but are rational, logic and surely useful.

Not only that, you can decide to practice other techniques – for example the traditional *Pranayamas* like *Nadi Sodhana Pranayama*, *Kapalabhati*, *Bhastrika*.... and you can tell me that they are fare more useful than what is given by the tradition of *Kriya Yoga*.

There are many things to consider when experimenting. In chapter 12 we shall discuss this theme. Now let us learn these three pillars of *Kriya Yoga* initiation.

MAHA MUDRA

Use a carpet placed on the pavement to practice the following procedure.

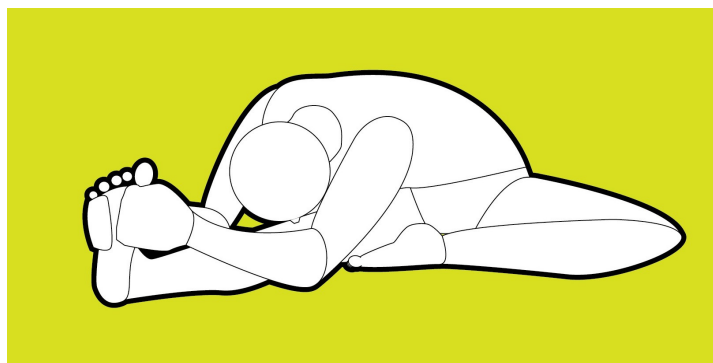


Fig.2 Maha Mudra

Bend the left leg under the body so the left heel is as near as possible to the perineum; the right leg is fully extended in front. Inhale deeply, feel the energy coming up in the head. Hold the breath, stretch forward (in a relaxed way) so that you can grasp the toes of your right foot with both

hands and gently pull them backwards. In this outstretched position, the chin is pressed naturally against the chest. Continue holding the breath and mentally chant *Om* in the region between the eyebrows 6-12 times.

You can contract the anal and the abdominal muscles and draw the abdominal muscles in slightly so the navel moves inward toward the lumbar center. While holding the breath, return to the starting position and with a long exhalation, visualize sending the warm energy down to the base of the spinal column.

Repeat the procedure with the leg positions reversed and finally repeat the procedure with both legs outstretched. This is one *Maha Mudra*; it requires about 60-80 seconds. *Maha Mudra* is to be practiced three times.

Note 1

This *Mudra* must be comfortable and it must not hurt! Initially, most *kriyabans* will not be able to do the forward stretch without risking back or knee injury. To avoid pain or injury, you can keep the outstretched leg bent at the knee until the position feels comfortable!

Note 2

The most serious schools of *Kriya* recommend that for every 12 *Kriya Pranayama*, one should perform one *Maha Mudra* – three remains the minimum number. (To make it clear, those who practice 60 *Kriya Pranayamas* should perform *Maha Mudra* five times, while those who practice 12 or 24 *Pranayamas* should perform it three times.) Unfortunately, having listened to different *kriyabans*, I dare say it would be a miracle if *kriyabans* regularly practiced even the three required repetitions. Others believe they are practicing *Kriya* correctly without ever practicing one single *Maha Mudra*! There is no doubt that if you regularly skip this technique and lead a sedentary life, the spinal column will lose its elasticity. One's physical condition deteriorates over the years and it becomes almost impossible to maintain the correct meditation position for more than a few minutes – that is why *Maha Mudra* is so important for *kriyabans*.

Effects

Maha Mudra incorporates all the three *Bandhas*. When applied simultaneously with the body bent forward and without excessive contraction, it helps one to be aware of both ends of *Sushumna* and produces the feeling of an energetic current moving up the spine. In due course, one will be able to perceive the whole *Sushumna* as a radiant channel. There are reports of *yogis* having achieved fantastic experiences

using only this technique. According to their accounts, the perception of *Sushumna* has increased tremendously. There are *kriyabans* who have set aside all the other *Kriya* techniques and practiced 144 *Maha Mudra* in two sessions daily. They consider *Maha Mudra* the most useful among all *Kriya Yoga* techniques.

Insignificant details

I have noticed that some schools insist on uninfluential details. For example they insist that when you extend the right leg in front, you must bend the left leg under the body so the left heel is as near as possible to the perineum. Then the left heel exerts pressure on the perineum. This pressure is of course a means of stimulating one's awareness of the *Muladhara Chakra* in the coccyx region at the root of the spine. [Of course when you extend the left leg, it is the right heel to create pressure.]

Another example is when some schools suggest drawing the knee (or both knees, before the third movement) against the body so the thigh is as close to the chest as possible during inhalation. They recommend that the interlocked fingers are placed around the knee to exert pressure on it. They say that this helps to keep the back straight and make the inner sound of the *Anahata Chakra* audible.

Another detail is this. As we have seen, in the outstretched position, the big toe is grasped with firmness. Some schools insist on this detail: the toenail of the right (left) big toe is squeezed with the thumb of the right (left) hand; the index and middle fingers are behind it. The left (right) hand cups the sole of the foot. When the procedure is repeated with both legs outstretched, both toes are grasped with the interlocked hands.

NAVI KRIYA (*three variations*)

For a lot of people this technique is boring and they jump it. In effects it is not strictly necessary. It will be when a particular teaching will be faced in the so-called *Higher Kriyas*, precisely: the *Advanced Form of Thokar*. I have found three variations of *Navi Kriya* and I deem it useful to introduce them so that the reader has a possibility of choice.

Navi Kriya. First variation – the most common

Forget the breath, let it be natural.

Rest the chin on the throat cavity. *Om* is chanted 100 – aloud or mentally – times in the navel region. The chin is then raised as much as possible and *Om* is chanted approximately 25 times in the third *Chakra Manipura*. This

is one *Navi Kriya*. Practice four *Navi Kriyas*.

In this exercise, if you like, the hands can be involved. With the fingers interlocked, palms face downward, pads of both thumbs touching, the thumbs lightly press the navel for each *Om*. When the chin is then raised the hands are kept behind the back and joined by interlocking the fingers with the palms facing upward. For every *Om*, the thumbs apply a light pressure to the lumbar vertebrae. This technique is repeated four times.

Navi Kriya. Second variation – the most beautiful and useful

This variation envisages a remarkable work upon *Dantian*. The *Dantian* can be visualized as a ball about one and one-half inches in diameter. Its center is located about one and one-half inches below the belly button and about two and one-half inches inside. Focusing the awareness inside the *Dantian* is something fantastic. This variation of *Navi Kriya* rivets the attention in a way that no other variation is able to produce. Its smooth shifting of energy along the circumference of the head has an effect without parallel.

How to practice. The chin is brought down toward the throat cavity. You have a short inhalation (two seconds maximum, without concentrating on the *Chakras*) followed by a very long exhalation during which the energy is felt descending from the frontal part of the brain, along a path outside the body to the navel, reaching through it the *Dantian* region. During this long exhalation, *Om* is chanted mentally, rapidly, 10-15 times, accompanying the descent of energy throughout the path. After a short pause in the *Dantian*, the head resumes its normal position.

A short inhalation draws the energy into the head again. Now each detail is repeated but the descent of the energy happens through a different path. The head bends but not in the front: it bends toward the *left* shoulder, without turning the face. A long exhalation (with the same chanting of *Om*, *Om*, *Om*...) accompanies the downward movement of energy which starts from the brain's left side and moves along a path outside the body at its left side (as if shoulder or arm would not exist). The energy comes down to the waist, cross it and moves toward the *Dantian*.

The head moves back into its normal position. After a short inhalation, the head bends backwards. A long expiration (with the same chanting of *Om*, *Om*, *Om*...) accompanies the downward movement of energy which starts from the occipital region and moves (outside the body) down to the waist where it bends, pierces the third *Chakra Manipura* and moves toward the

inside of the abdominal region (*Dantian*). The procedure is repeated likewise on the *right* side.

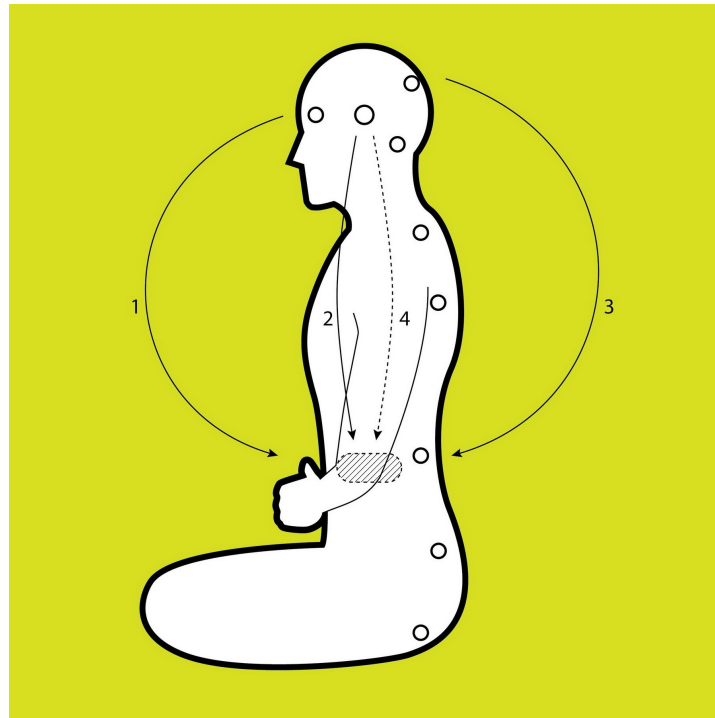


Fig.3 The energy enters the *Dantian* along four directions

The last exhalation concludes a mini cycle of four exhalations accompanied by four descents of energy towards the waist and, crossing it, towards the region of the *Dantian*. This mini cycle is repeated 9 times. In conclusion we have had $4 \times 9 = 36$ descents of energy. What we have described lasts 8-10 minutes and is equivalent to 4 repetitions of the basic form of *Navi Kriya*.

Navi Kriya. Third variation – nice

Visualize a tiny cord that comes out from the point between the eyebrows bends slightly and goes down to the navel.

The procedure consists in mentally chanting the *Om Mantra* in alternation between the point between the eyebrows and the navel. Precisely, when it comes natural to have an inhalation, inhale, visualize the movement of air rising, through the visualized duct, from the navel to the point between the eyebrows, pause an instant there just chant *Om* mentally. When it comes natural to exhale, exhale, visualizing the movement of air going down into the navel, pause and chant *Om* mentally in the navel. By repeating this, you will markedly feel that your breath begins to subside and disappear.

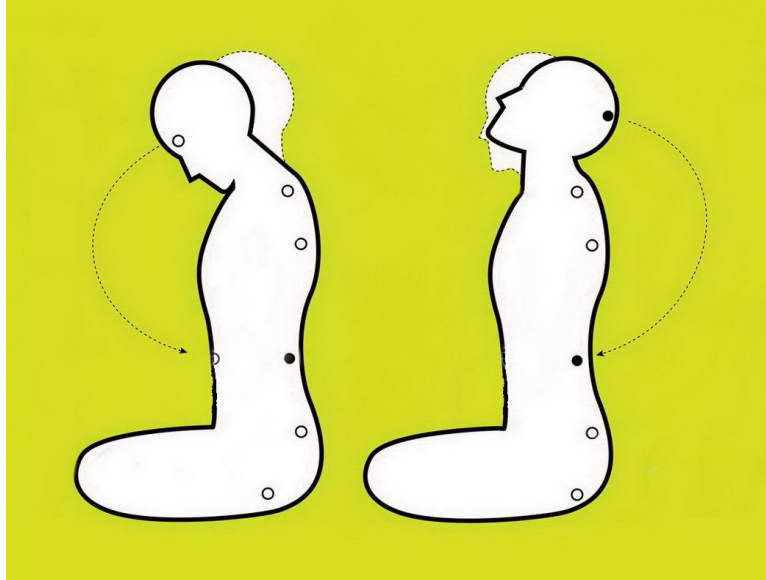


Fig.4 Simple form of Navi Kriya

When *Om* is chanted about 100 times, bend your head backwards and repeat a similar procedure by chanting *Om* in alternation between the *Bindu* and the third *Chakra*. Visualize another cord that connects (outside your body) the *Bindu* to the third *Chakra*. Let your breath – if there is still a trace of breath – flow freely through that cord. When *Om* is chanted about 25 times, resume the chin's normal position. This is one *Navi Kriya*. The optimum is to have 4 cycles of *Navi Kriya*.

YONI MUDRA

After a deep *Kriya* inhalation, having drawn the energy up to the central part of the head, close the ears with the thumbs, the eyelids with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers, the lips with the ring and the little fingers. Hold your breath while mentally repeating *Om* several times and observe any light in the point between the eyebrows. Hold the breath as long as is comfortable. Both elbows are parallel to the floor and pointing out to the side. Do not let them drop, prop them up somehow, if necessary.

During this special light-witnessing act, the index fingers must not put any pressure on the eyes – this would be harmful and serve no purpose! You can draw the eyelids down with the index fingers and apply pressure on the upper cheekbones at the corners of the eyes. When you feel that you need to breathe, exhale and bring the awareness down along the spine. *Yoni*

Mudra is usually performed only once.

After *Yoni Mudra*, remain concentrated as long as possible at the point between the eyebrows trying to perceive the light in *Kutastha*. Then open your eyes and stare at what is before you but do not observe anything in particular. Watch without watching. After a while you will become aware of a subtle line of white Light, softened, as a fog, around all objects. The Light will become progressively white and greater. Avoid thinking. Keep the gaze fix. After 5 minutes close your eyes and rest for awhile before standing.



Fig.5 Yoni Mudra

The fundamental instruction is to increase the number of repetitions of *Om* repetitions (while holding the breath) by one per day up to a maximum of 200. It is recommended to avoid forcing. But how it is possible to achieve these results without forcing? In my opinion this ability can be achieved only in time, especially after a confrontation with the *Thokar* procedure. For the present moment I share a simple remedy that can reduce the discomfort of a long *Kumbhaka*.

At the end of a moderate inhalation (not a typical *Kriya Pranayama* one but a shorter one), a *kriyaban* fully plugs all the head openings except the nostrils, exhales a very small quantity of air, then immediately closes the nostrils. The thoracic muscles are to be relaxed as if one intended to begin a new inhalation: this will give the sensation that the breath has become quiet in the area between the throat and the point between the eyebrows. In this situation, the repetition of *Om* several times while concentrating on the

point between the eyebrows can be enjoyed to its fullest.

Remark

You have read that this technique is to be practiced only at night, at the end of your routine. You can actually practice it anytime! However the technique is best done in the deep calmness of the night, when silence is all around and one is totally and perfectly relaxed. *Yoni Mudra* generates such a concentration of energy at the point between the eyebrows that the quality of the ensuing sleep changes for the better. In other words, after crossing the subconscious layers, your awareness may succeed in reaching the so-called "super conscious" state.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO CONCEIVE A KRIYA ROUTINE

Now, having all these techniques, how can you conceive a good *Kriya* routine? There are different possibilities. I bring here only three examples.

Example 1:	Example 2:	Example 3:
Maha Mudra	Maha Mudra	K. Pranayama (only 12)
K. Pranayama	Navi Kriya	Maha Mudra
Navi Kriya	K. Pranayama	Navi Kriya
Mental Pranayama	Mental Pranayama	K. Pranayama again
		Mental Pranayama

I counsel to practice *Yoni Mudra* a part: this technique is so delicate that if not practiced in a perfect way, risks to ruin all the meditative experience.

MENTAL PRANAYAMA

This is the most pleasing part of the routine. *Chakras* are like knots that can be untied if "touched" by one's concentration. One feels vast and free as the sky and knows the formless joy. A *Kriya* routine that does not end with the enjoyment of such sweetness is like an orchestra going on stage, unpacking the instruments, tuning them and then leaving at once!

After three deep breaths, let your breath be natural and forget it. Move your awareness up and down the spine pausing in each spinal center for about 10-20 seconds. Start with the first, pause there, move to the second, pause....and so on. After ascending to the *Medulla*, start the descent, pausing in the fifth *Chakra*, fourth *Chakra*, and so on. One complete round lasts about 2-4 minutes.

Try to catch the sweetness emanating from each *Chakra*. It does not suffice

to keep on exerting a mental and even physical pressure on each *Chakra*, unable to relax. Do not complicate the teaching with various details (which could be useful in other techniques but not in the present one – contracting the muscles near each *Chakra*, utilize intense visualizations and *bija mantras*.... You risk all the sweetness is dispelled. Even ... mentally chanted Om in each *Chakra* may be disturbing.

The secret lies in maintaining the awareness in each of them until a sensation of sweetness is felt, as if the *Chakra* were "melting". It is important you assume a passive attitude and patient as well, with total reliance on what will be revealed by the practice itself.

So remember: *mental Pranayama* must be brought ahead with great seriousness until a deep silence settles in the consciousness. While going ahead with the *Kriya path*, you will discover that the *mental Pranayama* will turn first into the *Second Kriya* and finally will become the supreme form of *Kriya Pranayama*, the one that Lahiri Mahasaya called *Uttam Pranayama* (*Excellent Pranayama*.)

You will learn to utilize your meditation born intuition for effective handling any issue that arises from life. Inside the perfect transparency of an inner order, all problems are solved. I think that one is "born" to *Kriya* (understand the greatness of what they are doing) while perceiving the effects of such sweet practice: its beauty overflows our lives.

"... it's hard to stay mad, when there's so much beauty in the world. Sometimes I feel like I'm seeing it all at once, and it's too much, my heart fills up like a balloon that's about to burst... And then I remember to relax, and stop trying to hold on to it, and then it flows through me like rain and I can't feel anything but gratitude for every single moment of my stupid little life. (From the movie American Beauty; 1999) "

DIGRESSION ABOUT KECHARI MUDRA

(What is, how to obtain it)

Kechari Mudra means inserting the tongue in the hollow of the nasal pharynx. *Kriya Pranayama* should be practiced with the tongue in that position. I say "should" because very few people are able to practice in that way. [In the next Chapter we shall introduce a method (*Talabya Kriya*) to achieve *Kechari Mudra*.]

The ancient *yogis* discovered the importance of connecting the tip of our tongue with the seat of the calm *Prana* in the brain. Usually our tongue is normally unable to touch the uvula and, consequently, enter the nasal pharynx. Because of this, we are limited in our connection with the great reservoir of energy existing in the *Sahasrara* region.

The practice of *Kriya Pranayama* with *Kechari Mudra* represents an enchanting experience, one of the best moments in the life of a *kriyaban*. However many must be contented by keeping their tongue in the "baby *Kechari*" position. What does this mean? It means that with the tip of your tongue you touch the upper palate at the point where the hard palate becomes soft. This easy-to-achieve position of the tongue is enough to make the mind very still.

To get *Kechari Mudra* we practice *Talabya Kriya* which is described below:

- ***Talabya Kriya***

Start with the tongue in a relaxed position with the tip lightly touching the back of the upper teeth. Press the body of the tongue against the upper palate to create a suction cup effect. **DON'T TURN YOUR TONGUE BACKWARDS!**

When you have created the suction-cup effect, lower the bottom jaw until you clearly feel the stretch in the *lingual frenulum* (the small fold of tissue under the tongue that attaches it to the base of the mouth.) Release the tongue with a clicking sound then stick it out of the mouth and point it toward the chin. At the beginning, do not exceed 10 repetitions a day to avoid straining the *frenulum*. Eventually, you will do 50 repetitions in about 2 minutes (110-120 seconds.)



Fig.6 Key part of Talabya Kriya

Some do not understand immediately how to make their tongue adhere to the upper palate before opening the mouth and stretching the *frenulum*. Sometimes, even when they are shown in person, they are still not able to do it correctly. Many practice *Talabya Kriya* incorrectly by instinctively turning their tongue backwards. The main mistake is concentrating too much on where to place the tip of the tongue. The suction effect is obtained with the whole body of the tongue: the tip of the tongue should be relaxed.

Note

The technique of the *Talabya Kriya* can be enriched by massaging both the muscles of the tongue and the frenulum with one's own fingers. Lahiri Mahasaya was absolutely against cutting the frenulum to obtain faster and easier results. In *Hatha Yoga* books there are different suggestions for lengthening the *frenulum*. One which is well known one is wrapping a piece of cloth around the tongue and, with the help of the hands, gently pulling (relaxing and repeating different times) the cloth both horizontally and also up, toward the tip of the nose.

I hope that it is clear that *Talabya Kriya* and *Kechari Mudra* are completely different! Open your mouth in front of a mirror during the first part of *Talabya Kriya* to see the hollow parts on each side of the *frenulum* which appear isolated from the body of the tongue; during *Kechari Mudra*, it is the uvula that comes forward and only the root of the tongue is visible!

Talabya Kriya is a technique that besides its utility to achieve *Kechari Mudra*, creates a perceivable relaxing effect on the thinking process. Therefore *Talabya Kriya* should not be considered a simple lingual

frenulum stretching process. When the tongue sticks to the palate and the mouth is opened, in that instant the energetic split between our body and the reserve of static *Prana* located in the upper part of our head is momentarily healed. This introduces you, in the best of the ways, into the meditation state. Even after mastering *Kechari Mudra*, *Talabya Kriya* should continue to be practiced because it creates a perceivable relaxing effect on the thinking process. It is not known why stretching the *frenulum* reduces thought production, however, anyone practicing the technique can readily verify this.

Oddly enough, *Talabya Kriya* doesn't require concentrating on anything, it is purely physical. Just as an attempt to justify this, we can say that merely pressing the tongue against the upper palate and maintaining the suction effect on the palate for 10-15 seconds, can, in and of itself, generate sensitivity in the *Medulla* area in a very short time. The detail of extending the tongue plays an important part too. When the tongue is fully extended, it pulls on some cranial bones and leads to decompression of the whole area.

- ***Check if you are near to Kechari Mudra***

After several months of regular practice of *Talabya Kriya*, it is counseled to check how much you are near to *Kechari Mudra*. The test is whether the tip of the tongue can touch the uvula, utilizing the fingers to push the base of the tongue inward. If the tip of the tongue touches the uvula, then for some minutes a day, try to push with more force the basis of the tongue inward until the tip goes beyond the uvula and touches the pharynx behind it.

One day, the tip of the tongue will enter a centimeter or so into the nasal pharynx but slip out when the fingers are removed. But, after some more days, on removing the fingers, the tip of the tongue will remain "trapped" in that position.

This is the turning point. The soft palate (the part from which the uvula hangs) acts like an elastic band and creates a hook. This prevents the tongue from slipping out. By striving each day to practice at least 6-12 *Kriya Pranayama* with the tongue in this position – despite some discomfort such as an increase in salivation and occasional swallowing – the practice of *Kechari Mudra* becomes easy and comfortable. After about three weeks of practicing in this way, you should be able to reach the same position without using the fingers. The tongue will be able to insert itself into the nasal-pharynx cavity. There will still be enough space left in the cavity to inhale and exhale through the nose.



Fig.7 Position of the tongue when you enter the nasal-pharynx

Kriya literature affirms that the tongue can be pushed even farther up. Any good anatomy book will reveal that the tongue cannot extend any farther when it fills up the nasal pharynx. That assertion should therefore be understood as a hint to what a normal person thinks is happening. Actually, by extending the tongue to its limit, it is possible to experience a great attraction toward the region between the eyebrows along with the sensation of having reached, with the tip of the tongue, a higher position.

- ***First effects of Kechari Mudra***

During the first three weeks of *Kechari Mudra*, you experience "dizziness" and fogged up mental faculties. Be prepared for this eventuality and consider abstaining from driving and any work involving a significant proportion of risk during this time.

Kechari Mudra has a remarkable effect upon upon the state of our mind. When you become stable in this *Mudra*, you will notice a quieting of all useless, unwanted thoughts. The internal chatter ceases; silence and transparency become the features of one's consciousness. The mind works in a more restrained way and enjoys an essential rest; each thought becomes more concrete and precise.

After several months of tireless practice, your tongue will reach the junction of the nasal passage inside the hole in the palate. The soft tissue above the holes in the internal part of the nostrils is alluded to in *Kriya* literature as the "uvula above the uvula". The tip of the tongue reaches this small area and remains "stuck" there comfortably.

About the necessity of Kechari Mudra to practice the higher Kriyas

Kriya literature affirms that *Kechari Mudra* is decisive to receive initiation into the *Higher Kriyas*. There is nothing unusual that a *Kriya* teacher wants the student's mouth opened in front of them and see the tongue disappear into the nasal pharynx.

However great the effect of *Kechari Mudra*, I firmly believe it is important but not indispensable. The affirmation that I have often heard – "Until one is established in *Kechari Mudra*, one cannot achieve the state of Eternal Tranquility" – is FALSE!

We cannot conceive that the achievement of *Kechari* creates a sharp division among people. Confined to a lower class are those poor little fellows who will never get the *Higher Kriyas* just because they don't succeed in realizing something physical that doesn't depend on their efforts but on their constitution. They will never succeed in speeding up their spiritual path like those *kriyabans* that nature has endowed with a longer bridle or with a nasal pharynx more accessible to the tip of the tongue... the whole idea is absurd.

P.Y.'s decision to allow initiation into the *Higher Kriyas* to those unable to practice *Kechari Mudra* should have our full praise. Considering Lahiri Mahasaya's attitude to partake of our imperfection and suffering, I believe he too behave similarly.

CHAPTER 8
LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – THIRD PART
(Higher Kriyas (II, III, IV) – The art of Thokar)

Thokar is the art of forcing (pushing) energy from the body (precisely from the head or lungs) somewhere in the spine to unlock a knot, an inner obstacle.

Thokar in its variants represents the perfection of Kriya Pranayama. The ancient texts of Hatha Yoga say that Pranayama without the three Bandhas (Jalandhara, Mula and Uddiyana) is useless, they say also that the Bandhas are useless without Maha Veda, well all the Bandhas are contained in Thokar and the Maha Veda is in that form of Thokar that we call Fourth Kriya.

The practice of *Thokar* is always preceded by the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and, if possible, by the practice of *Navi Kriya*.

Second Kriya [Elementary form of Thokar]	You focus your concentration on the two upper parts of the lungs (first the right, then the left), guiding the energy from the left lung into the heart <i>Chakra</i> . This happens in a sharp way. This way is called <i>Thokar</i> .
Third Kriya [Advanced form of Thokar]	You do the same action as in Second Kriya but you repeat it many, many times while holding your breath.
Fourth Kriya [Complete form of Thokar]	After inhalation, guide the energy down from the head to the lungs, then from the lungs to the heart Chakra. The energy does not stop there. Actually the energy is guided in a strong way to hit (awakening them) the third, the second and the first Chakra.
Fourth Kriya with Maha Veda	After the inhalation, guide the energy down from the head to the lungs, then from the lungs directly to the <i>Muladhara Chakra</i> location. There you apply the procedure of <i>Maha Veda</i> [which is the well know <i>Tadan</i>]

► **SECOND KRIYA [ELEMENTARY FORM OF THOKAR]**

Initial inhalation

All these techniques begin with a Kriya inhalation: moderately contract the muscles at the base of the spine. Inhale and at the same time rise the awareness along the spinal column. Interlaced hands are placed over the

navel to create a mental pressure over the first three *Chakras*. This pressure is perfected by adding the practice of *Uddiyana Bandha*. During the inhalation, lift the chin following the inner movement of the *Prana*; mentally chant *Om* in each *Chakra*. Or you can mentally chant the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya.*) *Om* is chanted in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second, *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in *Bindu*. Hold your breath.

Specific part of this Second Kriya

Move your head a few millimeters to the left, then return to the center with your chin slightly up. Without stopping turn your face to the right. The chin goes down a bit to get closer to the front of the right shoulder. There should be no stress in this movement.

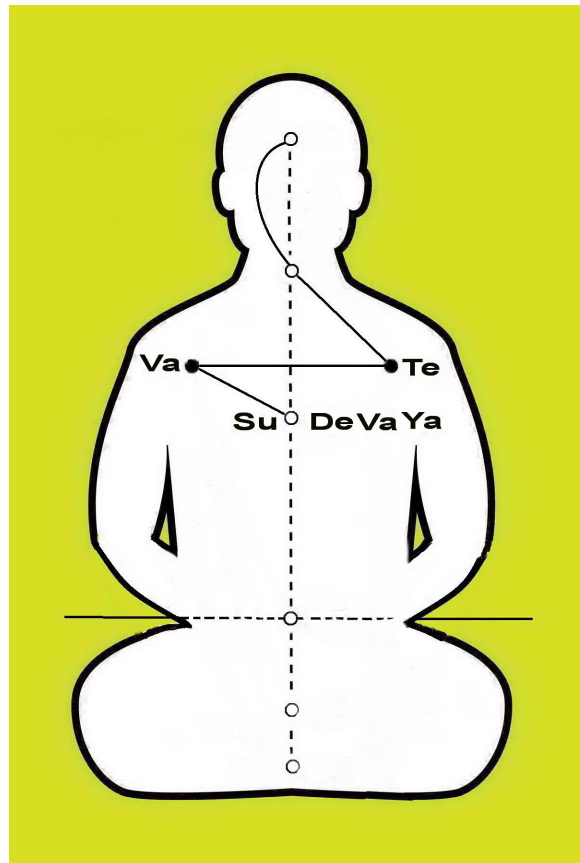


Fig.8 Second Kriya

Mentally chant "Tee" at the top of the right lung. Then slowly move your head to the symmetrical position by mentally placing "Va" at the top of the left lung. The syllable *Su* is vibrated in the center of the heart *Chakra*.

The singing of the syllable "Su" involves a precise stimulus in the heart *Chakra*; this is the simple *Thokar* that appears in the *Second Kriya*. While you hit this *Chakra*, intensify the practice of the *Mula Bandha*.

While exhaling go ahead intensifying the energy of the heart. Repeat very slowly De, Va, Ya in the heart Chakra.

Repeat the procedure at least 12 times. Then breathe naturally

Close your practice with *Mental Pranayama*

► THIRD KRIYA [ADVANCED FORM OF THOKAR]

Initial inhalation which is the same of the previous technique....

Specific part of this Third Kriya

Move your head a few millimeters to the left, then return to the center with your chin slightly up. Without stopping turn your face to the right. The chin goes down a bit to get closer to the front of the right shoulder. There should be no stress in this movement.

Mentally chant "Tee" at the top of the right lung. Then slowly move your head to the symmetrical position by mentally placing "Va" at the top of the left lung. The syllable Su is vibrated in the center of the heart Chakra while directing the chin near the center of your chest with a rapid movement. This produces a hit (Thokar) in the center of the heart Chakra.

Do not exhale, repeat the "*Te Va Su*" procedure. "Repeat" means: raise your chin and focus for an instant your awareness to *Bindu* where you vibrated the sixth syllable *Ba*, move your head a few millimeters to the left, then return to the center with your chin slightly up. Without stopping turn your face to the right... vibrate *Tee* at the top of the right lung. Then move your head to the symmetrical position by mentally placing *Va* at the top of the left lung, then practice again Thokar on the heart by vibrating *Su* in it.

...repeat and repeat... : "*Te Va Su*" "*Te Va Su*" "*Te Va Su*"...

Feel the irradiation of Light increasing, maintaining the state of Kumbhaka... keep it until you feel that it is correct to stop and exhale.

To give an idea of the speed of the movements, the entire process from inhalation to exhalation with 12 repetitions of the rotation of the head (each rotation concluding with the movement of the chin toward the chest) lasts around 80 seconds.

This technique is to be practiced once a day.

A first counsel to increase comfortably the number of rotations

Traditionally, one begins with 12 cycles of the head movements unhurriedly during one single breath and increases by one every day up to 200 repetitions. This *Kriya* is considered mastered when one reaches 200 rotations without interrupting the *Kumbhaka* state. It is imperative not to feel uneasiness! "Do not force" is the pressing recommendation!

Now, how is it possible to achieve the goal of 200 rotations, without interrupting the *Kumbhaka* state, comfortably? Satisfying this request appears very difficult – almost impossible. Almost all *kriyabans* are jammed after 30-40 repetitions, while gasping for breath.

Does the solution lie in going ahead rotating your head much more quickly? No, this would be silly. Please consider what I am explaining now.

When you feel you have neared your limit holding your breath, while keeping the chest expanded and the abdominal muscles and diaphragm contracted and immobile, let a minimal (almost imperceptible) sip of air go out whenever the chin is lowered toward the chest and let an imperceptible sip of air enter whenever the chin is brought up. Do not do any specific act of inhaling or exhaling: relax and allow this phenomenon happen of its own accord. The sensation will always be of not breathing at all.

In other words, if you want to go ahead comfortably with this practice, you must give up the idea of keeping a perfect *Kumbhaka* while trying to reach the 200 rotations goal.

The counsel to renounce a perfect *Kumbhaka* is strange, but if you go ahead with this and repeat it a sufficient number of times (usually it's a matter of a couple of months), one day you will make a beautiful discovery: this strategy is no more necessary! Thanks to the effect of this practice upon the ganglia exerting an influence on the central cardio-respiratory mechanisms, the practice happens in better and better conditions, until one day you will be able to complete the 200 rotations without breathing and without hurry. You will experience a state of consciousness characterized by heightened feeling of freedom from physical laws. It is a matter of inner realization – an instinct which is discovered in time.

The advice that I have given can seem a desecration, however... it works.

**A second counsel (to increase comfortably the number of rotations)
to be applied before starting your *Third Kriya*.**

Before starting the *Third Kriya* procedure, inhale slowly and steadily through your nose and at the same time pull-in the stomach and lift up the the perineum. While inhaling, mentally repeat *Om, Na, Mo...*and raise the *Prana* to the upper part of the lungs. Then partially relax the muscles of the thoracic cage as if you were going to begin a new inhalation.

Focus your attention on the upper part of your rib cage. A part of this attention goes to the base of the spine. Mentally chant *Om, Om, Om...* rapidly (about two chants of *Om* per second) feeling your awareness like an ant, crawling up the innermost channel of the spine millimeter by millimeter from *Muladhara* upwards.

After no more than 4-6 seconds, you'll have reached the heart *Chakra*; go up further, in the region between the fourth and the fifth *Chakra* (the region related to the upper part of lungs and chest.) You will perceive a real, tangible freedom from the breath. Be sure to feel *Prana* pervade the rib cage and become calm and stable there. ⁵

Well, taking this as a basis, utilize the best attitude you have to reach a real, tangible freedom from the breath. Remain stable in this state, without ever letting the abdomen and the rib cage relax and the *Prana* slide down. In this mental and physical state, apply the first counsel given before and practice your *Third Kriya*. You will discover how beautiful and comforting is the experience of rotating your head (with *Te, Va, Su, Te, Va, Su...*) while the breath seems frozen in the thorax region.

► FOURTH KRIYA [COMPLETE FORM OF THOKAR]

Initial inhalation which, as we have said, is always the same ...
(see previous description)

Specific part of this Fourth Kriya

Move your head to the left of few millimeters, then return to the center with chin slightly up. Without stopping, turn your face toward right. The chin goes down a bit to get closer to the front of the right shoulder. Vibrate "Tee" at the top of the right lung. Then slowly move your head to the symmetrical position by mentally placing "Va" at the top of the left lung.

⁵ The counsel to mentally chanting *Om, Om, Om...* really draws energy in the spine from all the parts of your body and guides it toward the spine. If your body condition is perfect (if you are moderate with eating and you are on an empty stomach) you will notice that your breath is dissolved in some inexplicable way in the body.

From this position there is a movement of the chin to hit the *Anahata Chakra*. You mentally chant "Su" feeling a hitting sensation in the heart *Chakra*.

Holding your breath and starting from the upper part of the right lung where you again chant *Te*, repeat the movement of your head and place *Va* at the top of the left lung, then there is a movement of the chin to hit the third *Chakra* with the syllable *Su*. [Yes the same syllable you have utilized to hit the fourth *Chakra*.]

In a similar way you hit the second *Chakra* and then the first *Chakra Muladhara* where, after *Su*, you also chant the final syllables *De Va Ya*.

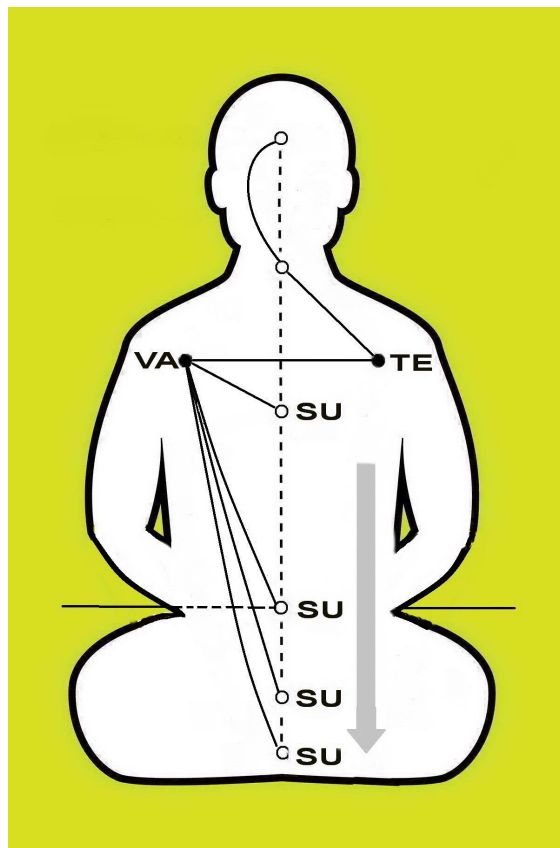


Fig.9 Fourth Kriya

During these four movements of your head (each movement is of course one *Thokar*) you have always held your breath. This procedure is lived in the *Kumbhaka* state.

Exhale feeling an ecstatic state. Repeat the whole procedure at least 12 times. Then breathe naturally.

Now consider if you want to go ahead intensifying the practice of hitting the *Muladhara Chakra*.

► FOURTH KRIYA WITH MAHA VEDA

Initial inhalation which, as we have said, is always the same ...
(see previous description)

Specific part of this Fourth Kriya with Maha Veda

Move your head to the left of few millimeters, then return to the center with chin slightly up. Without stopping, turn your face toward right. The chin goes down a bit to get closer to the front of the right shoulder. Vibrate "Teee" at the top of the right lung. Then slowly move your head to the symmetrical position by mentally placing "Va" at the top of the left lung. From this position there is a movement of the chin to hit the *Muladhara Chakra* with the syllable *Su*

When you come down with *Thokar* (you are holding your breath) lift your body, with the help of the hands, of few millimeters and then let the buttocks touch the seat with a mild jolt. *Thokar* in *Muladhara* happens in this moment. Have three jolts – be sure that you are holding your breath during them! Then exhale, slowly and deeply. Relax any tension, perceive an ecstatic feeling. This detail is very important: it is a signal that the *Prana* has entered the spine and *Kundalini* starts its travel upwards. The mental energy (not just the physical action) that you put in this exercise is a decisive factor. Repeat this *Kriya* for 6 to 12 times. Wait months before increasing.

Pranayama with Internal Breath

Consider the experience that Lahiri Mahasaya reports in his diaries when, a couple of years after his initiation at the Himalaya, he wrote: "After an excellent *Pranayama*, today the breath is completely directed inside. After so much time, today the purpose of my descent (on the earth) has reached!"

This is a great sentence! The breath has become *mental substance*, *something immaterial*. PY describes the same event by referring to an elevated form of *Kriya Pranayama* where energy moves without utilizing the breath.

Method to discover the Internal Breath

Let us suppose you have just completed your *Fourth Kriya*.

After exhaling your breath, don't pause but inhale very, very slowly, feeling

that you are really entering the spine. Come up as far as possible, crossing each *Chakra* while trying to reach your head. Proceed with great delicacy and sensitivity.

You will discover that you can, very easily, guide the movement of the energy up the spine. Perhaps only for a small stretch. Do not force – it is not necessary to complete that breath. Instead let your task unaccomplished and start another round of *Fourth Kriya*.

After that round, try again your experience with the *Internal Breath*. Whatever happens, whatever you perceive (a very delicate current moving up the spine) is precious.

At a certain moment you will experience with renewed joy that you are really inside the spine and your *Pranayama* has become more subtle than you ever thought possible. You will feel the beauty and the strength of this process: for some days you will not desire to do any other thing. This work will seem you the most important thing to do.

We have written that at the end of *Thokar* it is wise to practice any technique that guides *Kundalini* energy to come up to *Kutastha*. We have up to now counseled the procedure: "*Mental Pranayama*" Now we describe a higher technique which requires more time but is fantastic.

► GAYATRI KRIYA

This technique is very ancient and existed before Lahiri Mahasaya begun his mission of spreading *Kriya*. Its structure is well known in India and is considered the subtlest way of using the *Gayatri Mantra*. It contains the same principles of the technique *Japa* 432. Therefore there is no reason to practice both.

The *Gayatri Mantra* is considered to be a supreme vehicle for gaining spiritual enlightenment. The purest form of *Gayatri Mantra* is *Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargho Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat*. (Oh, great Spiritual Light who has created the Universe, we meditate upon Your glory. You are the embodiment of Knowledge. You are the remover of all Ignorance. May You enlighten our Intellect and awaken our Intuition.)

This *Mantra* is prefaced with either a short or a long invocation. The short invocation is: *Om Bhur; Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha*. The terms *Bhur; Bhuvah, Swaha* are invocations to honor the three planes of existence (physical,

astral, and causal respectively) and to address their presiding deities. The long invocation is: *Om Bhur, Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam*. This invocation is more complete since it recognizes that there are more planes of existence: the seven *Lokas*. *Mahah* is the mental world, the plane of spiritual balance; *Janah* is the world of pure knowledge; *Tapah* is the world of intuition; *Satyam* is the world of Absolute, Ultimate Truth. We can be satisfied with the explanation that these sounds are used to activate the *Chakras* and connect them to the seven spiritual realms of existence. In our procedure, we use only the opening long invocation in its complete form and not all the parts of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Kriya* tradition we are following here links *Manipura* with *Om Mahah* and *Anahata* with *Om Swaha*. The reason is that the world of thinking, evoked by *Om Mahah*, is more appropriate to the nature of the third *Chakra*, while the causal world of pure ideas, evoked by *Om Swaha*, is related to *Anahata Chakra*.

Practical instruction

Become aware of the *Muladhara Chakra*. Contract the muscles near its physical location: the contraction can be repeated two-three times. Through a deep inhalation (not necessarily as long as in *Kriya Pranayama*) visualize the *Muladhara Chakra* coming up into the point between the eyebrows, where you perceive it as a full moon. You don't come up "touching" the other *Chakras*. Now they don't exist. Hold the breath and focus on the "inner space" between the eyebrows. This comes out easily with *Kechari Mudra*.⁶ On the screen between the eyebrows, a particular color experience happens – this color is different for each *Chakra*. Mentally chant at least three times the specific *Mantra* for the *Muladhara Chakra*: *Om Bhur*. Then, through a long exhalation, ideally lower this *Chakra* from the point between the eyebrows to its proper location in the spine. Now you know what to do with each other *Chakra*.

The *Mantras* to be utilized are:

Om Bhur for *Muladhara*;
Om Bhuvah for *Swadhisthana*;
Om Mahah for *Manipura*;

⁶ "Ke-chari" is literally translated as "the state of those who fly in the sky, in the ether". A particular "space" is created in the region between the tip of the tongue and the point between the eyebrows and is perceived as a "vacuum", although it is not a physical void. By merging into this empty space, it is easier for a *kriyaban* to perceive the rhythms of each *Chakra* and distinguish them one from another.

Om Swaha for *Anahata*;
Om Janah for *Vishuddha*;
Om Tapah for *Medulla*

Add a particularly intense concentration at the point between the eyebrows. Hold your breath; raise your eyebrows, become aware of the light. Repeat *Om Satyam*.

Now complete the "round" by lifting *Chakras* 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, always using the contraction, the chanting of the *Mantra*, being aware of any particular Light experience in *Kutastha*. If possible repeat the procedure 6 to 12 rounds.

In *Kriya* tradition, the *Chakras* are related to the five *Tattwas*: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Offering each *Tattwa* individually to the light of the "spiritual eye" gathering and intensifying in the region between the eyebrows is the highest action ever conceived to dispel the last shell of illusion. The experience of the changing colors in the spiritual eye means to perceive the particular vibration and light frequency of each *Chakra*. By familiarizing with these frequencies leads you to the realization that all the universe exists in *Kutastha*.

Advanced practice

In time it will be possible for you to mentally repeat "*Om Bhur*" 36 times holding your breath. This gives you the power to tune with earth-*Tattwa* experiencing the peculiar "vibration" of the *Muladhara Chakra*.

At the same time, by repeating the *Mantra* "*Om Bhuvah*" 36 times it will be possible to tune with water-*Tattwa* having its seat in the second *Chakra*.... then comes the turn of the fire-*Tattwa*...

Digression about the effects of an intensive practice of Thokar

The most precious effect is the manifestation of a particular joy in the heart as if you moved around with an ardent brazier in your heart. This will develop in a *Bhakti* whose intensity will surprise you. You will learn to practice the presence of God and perform your daily duties in His presence.

Let us deal with emotions because it is upon them that the practice of *Thokar* acts in an admirable way. I have tried to retrace the theme "emotions" in some oriental books and have found so much rhetoric, too many words without practical meaning. They distinguish between positive (affection, happiness, contentment...) and negative (envy, aggressiveness,

illusion ...) emotions, but at the end of boring discussions you still have not grasped the essential fact: untamed emotions can create disaster in one's life. We are governed by superficial emotions and instincts that include our religious conditioning, our weak points, our fears, our doubts and our pessimism. It is important to have the ability to keep emotions at bay, going our way even when all the world and even our closest friends are trying to convince us to follow theirs.

We all know how frantic and hysterical emotions often rise unexpectedly from one's inner self, then disappear after a while. They actually express a reality devoid of authentic depth but their propulsive action inevitably results in hurried acts accompanied by a sort of cerebral fever, nourished by a narrow, visceral pleasure. When passion inflames one's whole being, it is not possible to be guided by common sense; the consequence is that our deeper and most earnest choices sometimes withdraw to an irrevocable halt.

Just as during the summer hail stones are molded, condensed and enlarged in the air before falling down to the earth and cause disasters, fatal decisions take shape in advance in one's imagination. During daily, frequent daydreams, the perspective of renouncing something positive which requires a great commitment throws a false light upon our immediate future, so that what in the past would appear as an act of cowardice, now seems to glitter at the horizon of our life, like a dull, flat, somber sky that suddenly lights up, serene, in luminous azure blue. When we listen to such alluring emotions, we pave the way for our doom. A wrong decision may become our crucifixion, our covenant with unhappiness, with a state of inner misery that will last a lifetime.

And lo, some put aside *Kriya Yoga* forever, while others interrupt a course of studies and throw away a profession they had been dreaming for years for which they had fought and suffered. They do the same with a beloved, with friends, with their family itself. Nothing can stop them: the wise words of people near them have no power anymore. An indomitable internal strength wants to produce sheer calamity in their life. Sometimes we have the idea that a person wants only one thing: to affirm with stubbornness his "*right to pain and suffering*" – the last is an expression of *the Mother*, main disciple and companion of *Sri Aurobindo*.

The destructive effects of yielding to this force remind those of an asteroid falling through the atmosphere on its way to fire and destruction. So, there is a reasonable hope that the completion of the Incremental Routines save

one from being a victim of this havoc, having built an almost automatic reflex of not being influenced or guided by frantic emotions.

Many *kriyabans* break some important human relationships because they assume that their religious choices are criticized. Sometimes a breakup of a relationship is unavoidable, other times it is a great loss especially if it is the product of the orgasm of pride. Many times people are annoyed by sincere and constructive criticism as if it was a useless display of cruelty.

They believe the other counterpart provokes sadistically enervating discussions with inappropriate topics.

Sometimes *kriyabans* are too prideful to accept other "uninitiated" people's commonsense. On the contrary, it is necessary to listen to other people's opinion, especially if it comes from our family or from all people who love us. Those who have become prey of destructive cults, have not listened anyone's opinion. The more the criticism has sound basis, the more one feels as if they were swallowing a black, sharp-edged rock.

A *kriyaban* who believes they are following their heart but who is actually just venting their most violent frustrations, can, on this occasion, reject any discussion and break off a relationship lasting a lifetime with an action of such "radiant" free will as to overwhelm all bystanders. Several days go by and their heart feels heavy; the subtle deception of the mind creates the firm belief that any saint, any true mystic would have acted in the same way. They want to believe that beneath their action there was an almost sacred motive, linked with destiny and karma.

If the risk of retracing one's steps appears, pride will prevail, driving the presently exciting pleasure of freedom to the top. This emotion -- which is perhaps a sadistic satisfaction in disguise -- makes existence to be as beautiful as ever, just like being reborn after a long and painful malady. Wisdom has no chance of prevailing. A strange frenzy fills the mind of our *kriyaban*, making even the most trivial activity enjoyed with uninterrupted voluptuousness, surrounded by flashes of blue. Yet a pain in their heart remains, despite the rosier projects. A good crumb of their spiritual aspiration is trapped in a past that can no longer be reached due to their unwillingness to endure the full impact of a truthful and honest reminiscence. Wounded pride is an emotion that suffocates.

CHAPTER 9
LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – FOURTH PART
(Higher Kriyas (V, VI) – The Tribhangamurari experience)

In this school the *Fifth Kriya* happens in three steps called: *Amantrak*, *Samantrak* and *Thokar* (this *Thokar* is different from what was described in the preceding chapter.) A new concept – the *Macro movement Tribhangamurari* – is introduced.

The *Sixth Kriya* will then be introduced by discovering that the *Movement Tribhangamurari* exists also inside each *Chakra*. It will be called *Micro movement Tribhangamurari*.

The *Macro movement Tribhangamurari* is perceived first by simply moving one's breath and awareness along a prescribed path, then this perception happens in the state of tranquil breath and is accompanied by the *Vasudeva Mantra*. At the end this perception is reinforced through the help of the movements of the head. By repeating this procedure, going up from *Muladhara* to the head and coming down following the three-curved path *Tribhangamurari* (*Tri-banga-murari* = form with three curves) each *Chakra* is stimulated and partially pierced.

FIFTH KRIYA

Fifth Kriya first part: Amantrak

Start a deep, very long inhalation. Your tongue is stable in *Kechari Mudra* or at least in *baby Kechari*. Very slowly raise *Prana* and awareness through the spinal channel, from *Muladhara* to the *Sikha* point (*Bindu*) – half a minute is required. Do not pause in any *Chakra*. Then start a deep exhalation. Let *Prana* and awareness come slowly downwards along the *Tribhangamurari* path and reach *Muladhara*. Another half minute is required.

The *Tribhangamurari* path starts from *Bindu*, goes up to the left of a very short length, then descends toward the right side of the body. Once a particular point in the back (5-6 centimeters above the right nipple) is reached, it curves and moves leftwards to cross the heart knot. After reaching a point in the back that is 5-6 centimeters under the left nipple, it changes its direction again and points toward *Muladhara*.

The 3 procedures *Amantrak*, *Samantrak* and *Tribhangamurari Thokar* are not intended to be tested simultaneously. If, to spare time, you will do that, the only effect could be the imprinting on your mind a wrong way of conceiving the practice.

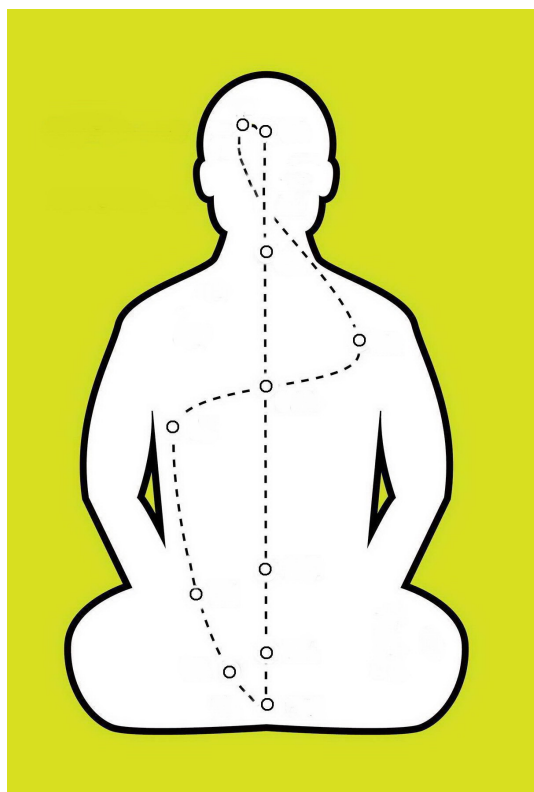


Fig.10 Tribhangamurari path as seen from the back

We call this technique *Amantrak*, which means "without the use of a *Mantra*." This teaching is addressed to expert *kriyabans* who can make their breath subtle and long, very long. It is possible to make a round of *Amantrak* last one minute. If you experience it in a shorter time, let us say 40 seconds, it does not mean that your practice is wrong. However, resolve to do your best to lengthen your breath.

Let us clarify the most important aspect of this procedure. Its essence it consists in the constant intensification of the mental pressure along the whole circuit. Consider the action of squeezing an almost empty tube of toothpaste to get the last bit out. This gives you an idea of the quantity of mental pressure you have to apply during this procedure. If you utilize a great strength of concentration and will, there is no limit to the increase of the internal energetic flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path.

As for the routine, some teachers gave this counsel: "For two weeks, repeat this technique 25 times, once a day. Then for another two weeks repeat it

50 times once a day; then for another two weeks 75 times and so on up to 200 times each day for two weeks. Only at this point you are supposed to practice the following *Samantrak* instruction."

We must clarify that those teachers did not give the initiations in *Second, Third, Fourth Kriya*. They gave initiation only into *First Kriya*, then required a particular preparation for this *Amantrak*: to practice *Kriya Pranayama* 200 a day for two – three months.

For those who have practiced conscientiously all the previous steps, a good prescription is this: "For a couple of months repeat this technique 36 times, once a day, then start to practice the following technique *Samantrak*."

Fifth Kriya second part: Samantrak

Samantrak means: "with the use of a *Mantra*." Now the breath is free, forget it wholly.

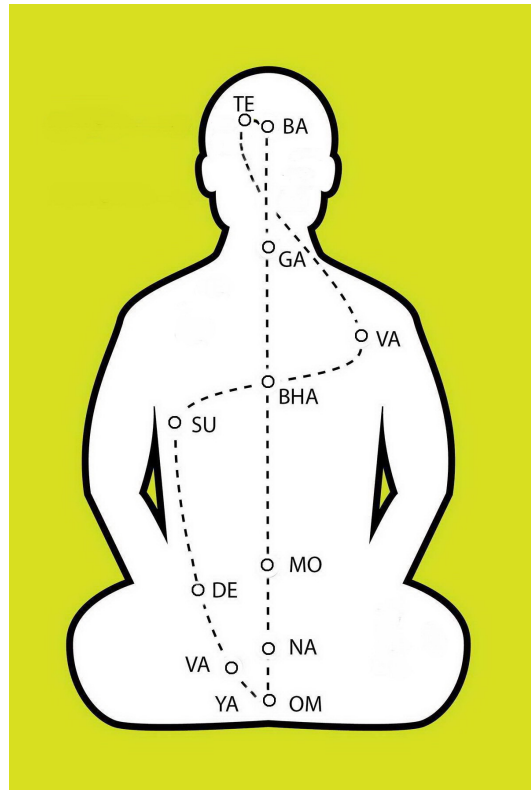


Fig.11 Tribhangamurari path, enriched with the syllables of the Mantra

The syllables *Om*, *Na*, *Mo*, *Bha*, *Ga*, are vibrated into the first five *Chakras*, *Ba* in *Bindu*. *Tee* (with prolonged eee ...) is chanted in the center in left part of the brain. The syllables *Va*, *Su*, *De*, *Va* are put in the four new centers outside the spine; *Ya* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

These five new centers are five "vortexes" inside the main flow of the current – they are not a new set of *Chakras*. Each syllable when vibrated is like a mental *Thokar* (hit): since the technique is performed slowly, there is plenty of time to make this stimulation very effective.

We have now described one round of *Samantrak*, which lasts one minute. If you realize it is shorter, let us say 45/50 seconds, make a resolution to reach the exact timing.

Remember what we have recommended while introducing *Amantrak*. Now, the essence of this particular procedure consists in utilizing the vibration of the 12 syllables to encourage a more keen intensification of the mental pressure along the whole circuit.

The prescription for starting the following practice are the same we have described for *Amantrak*. However, read carefully the following:

Don't be in a hurry!

Amantrak and *Samantrak* create in your body the perception of a particular internal movement. The *Thokar Tribhangamurari procedure* should be applied only when this energetic flow is well printed in your consciousness.

This technique, correctly applied, has the power to create a permanent transformation in your attitude towards *Kriya*. You will become acquainted with a mostly unknown ecstatic state while fully living the experience of life.

The *Mantra's* syllables, which are put with care like seeds in each center will change your mood. It is like turning on various lights along the three-curved path. It is like as if the rays of a sun in a clear sky finally entered your practice.

Some students try to relish right away the power of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* by a desultory, system-less experimentation of *Amantrak* and *Samantrak*, far from abiding by the given rules. What could be the real impact of the *Thokar-Tribhangamurari* technique remains unknown and not even vaguely foreshadowed.

Fifth Kriya final part: Thokar Tribhangamurari

Forget the breath or start with a very subtle breath. The hands (with interlocked fingers) are placed on the navel area so as to push the abdominal region upward, thus creating a physical pressure on the first three *Chakras*. Starting with the chin on the chest, move the energy and awareness very slowly along the spinal column from *Muladhara* to *Bindu*. Your chin comes slowly up following the inner movement. "Touch" internally each *Chakra* with the syllables of the *Mantra* (*Om* is placed in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second ...). When energy and awareness are at *Bindu*, the chin is parallel to the ground.

Now the descent of the energy begins. The movement of the head follows millimeter by millimeter its downward energetic flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path, crossing the heart *Chakra*. All this happens in a fluid way and within 30 seconds or less. The following description of the movements of the head may seem complicated at first but with a minimum of patience, the right movement of the head will be learned: you need only to understand that it is conceived in the most logical and effective way of intensifying a particular snakelike downward flow of the energy. Let us now begin to describe the movements of the head.⁷

Without turning the face, bend your head sideways a couple of centimeters to the left. Return to the middle raising the chin. Remain only an instant in this position, with the chin raised and slowly turn the face to the right and as far as possible. Only the face moves, not the torso. During this SLOW movement the inner flow of energy moves from *Bindu* to the point in the back of the right side of the body. Realize how this simple movement accompanies perfectly the descent of energy.

Here the first of five psycho-physical blows happens: the chin touches the right shoulder for an instant and the syllable *Va* is vibrated in the eighth center. The shoulder also makes a small upward motion to make contact with the chin easier. But be careful: if you feel you're forcing it, STOP! Those who are not able to have this contact with the right shoulder, should content themselves with coming as close to the shoulder as possible and stimulate the eighth center with sheer mental strength.

Then the face turns very slowly to the left, accompanying, millimeter by millimeter, the internal flow of energy from the eighth to the ninth center, and crossing the fourth *Chakra*. If possible, place the chin over the left

⁷ What is essential is: do not be influenced by the dynamics of the technique of classic *Thokar* learned in Chapter 9!

shoulder. The second blow takes place when the syllable *Su* is vibrated in the ninth center and the chin for an instant touches the left shoulder, which makes a small motion upward to make contact with the chin easier.

Two more blows happen when the syllables *De* and *Va* are put in the tenth and eleventh centers. The procedure is the following: the chin slowly moves toward the middle of the chest while grazing the left collarbone. During this movement, two light blows are given to the left collarbone in intermediate positions. The blows are given of course in the moment in which the syllables of the *Mantra* are vibrated. Finally, a last blow is given on the chest (central position) when the syllable *Ya* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

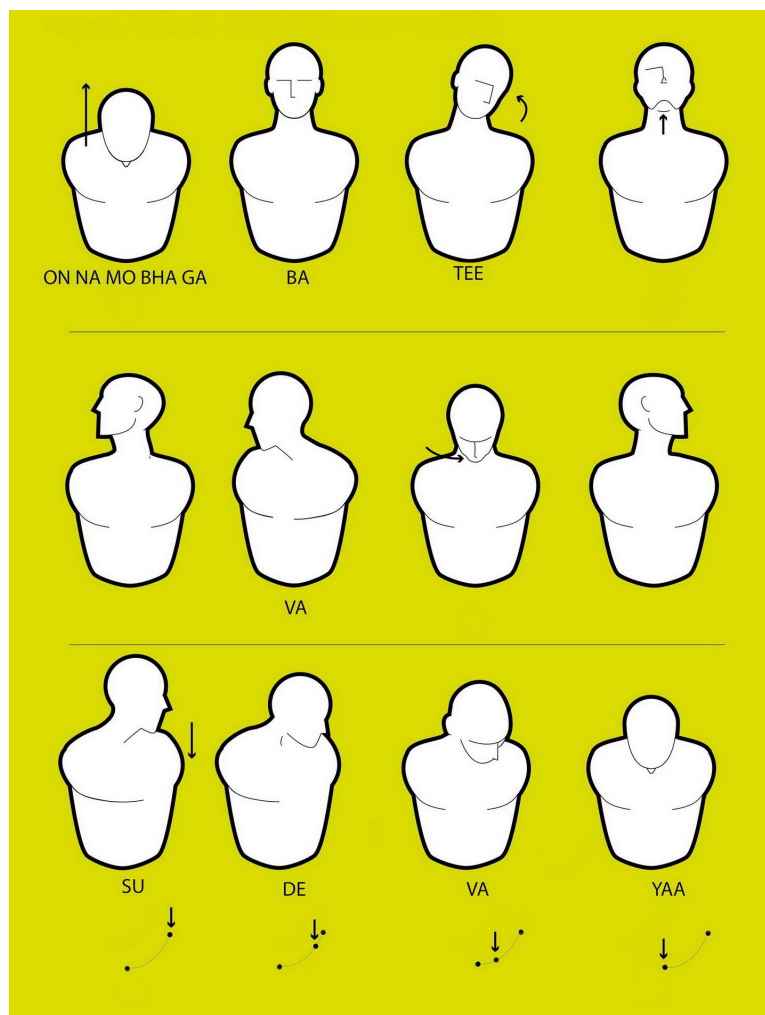


Fig.12 Thokar Tribhangamurari as seen from the front

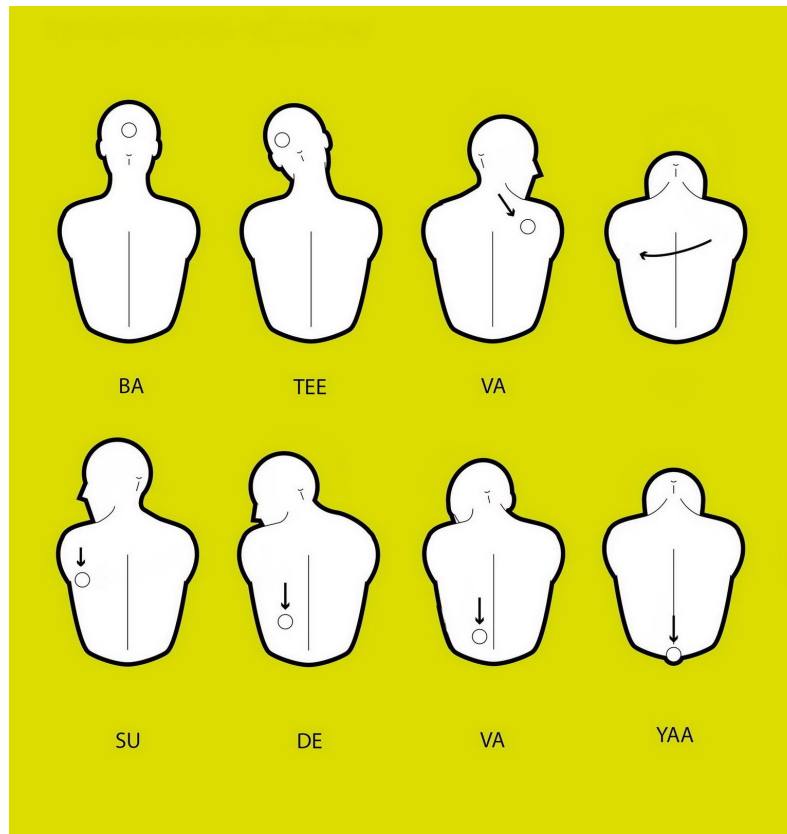


Fig.13 The same movements (only the descent) as seen from the back

I hope it is clear that the essence of this particular procedure consists in utilizing the movements of the head (with the five strokes) to encourage a further intensification of the mental pressure along the whole circuit.

Repeat the procedure 36 times. After completing the programmed number of rounds, calm the system with a minimal practice of *Samantrak*, then relax by practicing a simple *mental Pranayama*.

The supervision of an expert helps to avoid any problems – I am referring to stress and pain in the cervical vertebrae and in the muscles of the neck. Abrupt movements should be avoided; instead use a deep intensity of mental concentration. For the first couple of weeks do not practice every day but every two or three days.

Remark

Through this procedure, the *Tribhangamurari* flow is intensified by specific movements of the head. The problem is that many *kriyabans* focus all the attention on giving the strokes and don't understand the value of creating mental pressure along each millimeter of the path.

We have started with perceiving the movement sensation coming up along the spine and coming down along a three curved path. Then with *Samantrak* procedure we have reinforced the perception of the 12 centers. Now it is necessary to feel that the movements of the head accompany perfectly, millimeter after millimeter, the flow of the internal current. Now we can try to intensify the perception of the internal flow by creating a mental pressure along each part of it. We utilize the movements of our head to "touch with pressure" each millimeter of the path, up and down. The chin is to be moved slowly as we are striving to win a strong resistance. We have suggested the idea: "like squeezing with a pencil an almost empty tube of toothpaste to get the last little bit out. "

Incremental Routine of the macro movement Tribhangamurari

As soon as possible, begin the incremental routine of this procedure by practicing: 36x2, 36x3,..... 36x35, 36x36. Be careful to allow always one week to elapse between one stage and the next. I recommend this routine as a very important feat. A minimum of 8-10 months is required to complete it.

While *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* are practiced every day, the *Incremental* sessions of *Thokar-Tribhangamurari* are practiced once a week (the other days one can, however, practice up to 36 repetitions.) A *kriyaban* must have had all the time necessary to metabolize the subconscious material that the strong action exerted upon *Muladhara* brings to the surface.

One begins with 36 rounds; a week later one practices 36x2, then 36x3 ... and finally 36x36 repetitions. This means 1296 rounds! Can you imagine the powerful effects of this action? 1296 means that you begin in the morning and end in the night, doing again and again the same action. There is no doubt that you'll succeed in opening the door of *Sushumna*! Of course you have prepared this experience by practicing 36x35, and before that 36x34.... And don't forget that you have practiced *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* for months!

SIXTH KRIYA: MICRO MOVEMENT TRIBHANGAMURARI

This procedure reminds the teaching of Swami Hariharananda. He taught us to contact the *Omkar* reality in its manifestations of sound, light and movement or swinging sensation. The swinging sensation of the *Omkar* reality had a central place in his teaching.⁸ The books of *Yoga* explain the importance of feeling the energy moving throughout the body, for example rising from the *Muladhara* along the spine or, as Sri Aurobindo explained, coming down from the high and infused in the body. Swami Hariharananda on the contrary hinted at a feeling of movement or better of oscillation within each *Chakra*.

Perceiving an oscillation inside each *Chakra* is not exactly like perceiving the *Tribhangamurari* form in small dimensions, however the effects are, more or less, the same. The state of "absorption" created by having this particular perception in each *Chakra* has no comparison. Only few *Kriya* schools have disclosed the nature of this micro-movement and revealed its importance. Unfortunately, many people seek frantically impossible surrogates for it!

Practical instruction

After a minimum of 12 rounds of *Thokar Tribhangamurari*, you learn now to experience the movement *Tribhangamurari* in smaller dimensions inside the 12 centers of the *Macro Tribhangamurari* path.

Through a short inhalation, raise the *Prana* from the *Muladhara Chakra* into the spiritual eye between your eyebrows. Gently lower your chin, hold your breath and look "down" at the *Muladhara Chakra*. Visualize it as a horizontal disk, having a diameter of approximately one inch. On that disk perceive the *Tribhangamurari* movement in reduced dimensions.

Don't worry about the required time: it may be short, it may be long it doesn't matter. Exert a moderate but continuous pressure on the disk as if you had a pen and were drawing a clear continuous mark. Repeat two more times. Your breath is held effortlessly; the *Prana* remains totally in *Ajna Chakra*. After three perceptions of the Micro movement, you can relax and let *Prana* come down. A subtle exhalation happens but you may not be aware of it.

⁸ I remember that during his meeting with devotees he touched the head and the chest of some of them, vibrating his hand, trying to transmit a feeling as of a "oscillation."

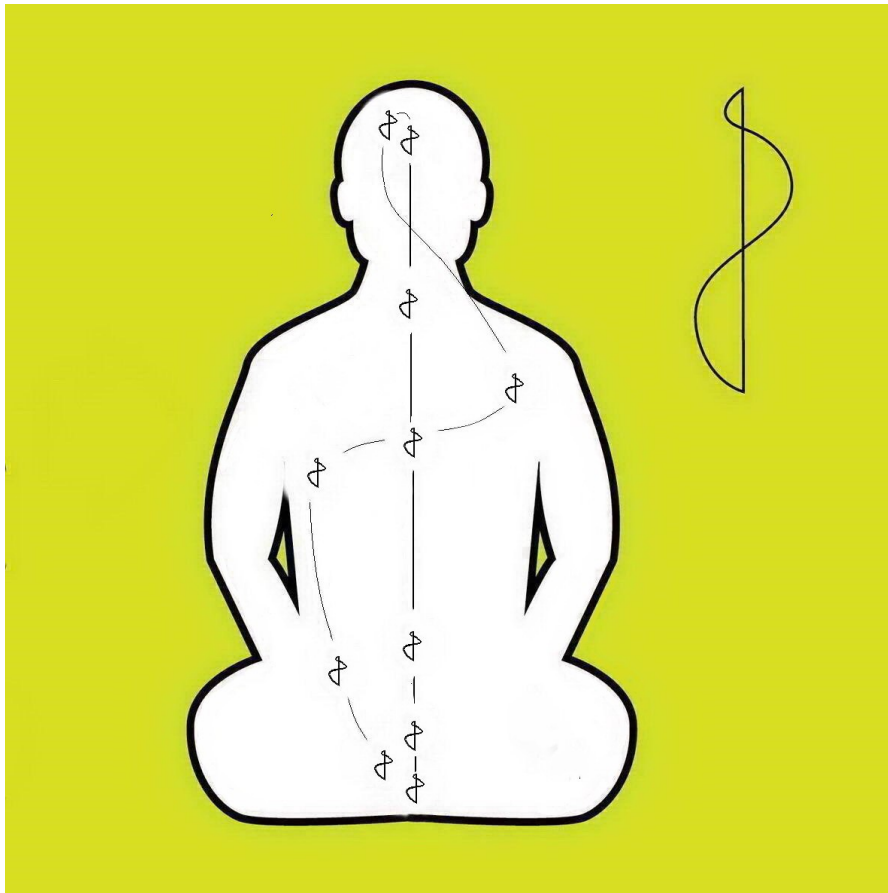


Fig.14 Tribhangamurari micro movement in each of the 12 centers

Move to the second *Chakra* and repeat the same procedure. Repeat it for *Chakras* 3, 4, 5, then for *Bindu*, then for the five new centers and finally for *Muladhara*.

This is round 1: practice two more rounds. Be faithful to this practice for at least three months before starting to increase the mental pressure upon each center employing the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*.

Micro movement Tribhangamurari utilizing the Mantra

In my opinion, this technique is the highest procedure contained in this second part of the book. It contains a mystery of Unworldly Beauty. Among the debris of past illusions, such experience open the doors of the spiritual realization. This internal movement embodies the deeper aspect of the Omkar reality. Perceiving it means to annihilate any form of duality present in the Chakras and therefore, in your awareness. It is as if the center between the eyebrows become one with each lower Chakra, fusing them in a unique reality. This will lead you out of time and space. A burning aspiration towards the Divine is born from this.

Practice *Kechari Mudra*. Through a short inhalation, raise the *Prana* from the *Muladhara Chakra* into the spiritual eye between your eyebrows. Forget the breath and look "down" at the *Muladhara Chakra*. Mentally utter the syllables "*Om-Na-Mo-Bha-Ga-Ba-Te-Va-Su-De-Va-Ya*". Do this *Japa* without hurry. Perceive the micro-movement *Tribhangamurari* and realize how the mental chant of the 12 syllables add a greater "pressure" to it.

Remain immobile with no movement at all of the spinal column or of the head. Here all the power of pressure has to be obtained with the sheer repetition of the syllables of the *Mantra*. These syllables are like mini "thrusts" or "pulsations".

The duration of one round is determined by the speed of the chanting of the *Mantra*. For many people, the chanting of the *Mantra* and consequently, the micro-movement lasts about 10-12 seconds. Remember that Lahiri Mahasaya's recommendation was "Don't be in a hurry!" Observe the difference between going slowly and with speed. If you go slowly, you will perceive a tremendous power.

Repeat the *Vasudeva Mantra* three times. *Prana* remains totally in the head. After three perceptions of the micro-movement, repeat the same procedure in *Chakras* 2, 3, 4, 5, then in *Bindu*, then in the five centers outside the spine, and finally in *Muladhara*. This is one round: practice 3-12 rounds. At the end of this practice, remain with the awareness centered in the light that you will perceive in the upper part of your head. If you have proceeded without hurry you will get a state that can be defined "beyond time."

If, after the completion of the practice, you find the time to lie down supine (*Savasana*) you will get a particular state of physical and mental immobility where the *Kundalini* energy can climb up to the *Chakra* of the heart while the *Kutastha* will reveal itself.

Incremental Routine of the micro movement Tribhangamurari, to be completed in the last part of life

When I received this instruction I was told that, analogously to the *Yoni Mudra* which is practiced every night at the moment a *kriyaban* prepares to withdraw his awareness from the body and from the physical world and gets ready for sleep – which is a "small death" – the *Micro movement Tribhangamurari Incremental Routine* is like a peaceful return to the origin – a preparation to "die forever" – meaning to become forever free in Spirit. It was explained to me that this last *Incremental Routine*, besides being the best preparation for the conscious exit out of the body at death (*Mahasamadhi*), burned forever the necessity of reincarnating.⁹

In *Micro-movement Incremental Routine* we have 36 sessions of practice. What's new is that the major part of this session requires more than one day.

On the first day you perceive 36 Micro-movements in each of the 12 centers. The second session requires that you perceive 36x2 Micro movements in each center. [You experience one single long round: 72 Micro movements in the first *Chakra* without interruption, then 72 in the second *Chakra*, and so on....] After some days, you face the third session with 36x3 Micro movements in each center. Then other days pass by. Then you have your 36x4 session which will fill up your whole day.

The next steps: 36x5, 36x6, 36x7, 36x8, will not only fill up a whole day but also part of the next day. Therefore you must divide your effort into two parts. What was heretofore never allowed now happens: you can sleep a whole night between the two parts which are considered one session. What is important is that you start more or less immediately on the morning of the next day. Therefore, you are not allowed to go to work and it is also recommended that you keep silent, avoiding any opportunity for conversation. (However, the use of common sense should always prevail; if

⁹ As for what happens during the process of *Mahasamadhi*, we have heard many stories about possible "*Kriya* ways" of leaving the physical shell; obviously we cannot vouch for their authenticity. Some assert that the typical practice is *Thokar*, others hint at procedures happening entirely in *Kutastha*. We can reasonably assume that it is not always possible to perform the physical movement of *Thokar*. To focus one's awareness in the spine or at the point between the eyebrows may be the only thing possible. The most interesting thing I've heard is that some *kriyabans*, during the last weeks or months before leaving the body, practice only one technique: perceiving the *Micro-movement Tribhangamurari* nel *Kutastha*. At the moment of death, they merge with the Infinite through the same procedure.

addressed, a polite reply is always imperative.)

You can now understand that the following sessions require more days; the last session requires about 12 days! Let me describe what happens during the last session: you perceive 36x36 micro movements in each center! This means: 1296 micro movements in *Muladhara*, 1296 in *Swadhistan*.... and so on, ending after some days in *Muladhara* with 1296 movements.

Let me emphasize that one should never skip over a stage. Don't think, "On my next Summer holidays I'm going to find a dozen days to practice 36x36." No! It does not work in this way. Before perceiving the Micro movement 36x36 times in each center you must have perceived it 36x35 times. And before this, you should have perceived it 36x34 times, and so on....

Completing this *Incremental Routine* is really a giant achievement. Many splendid experiences will happen and the last internal obstacles will be cleared one after another. When you have completed your practice, you discover that you cannot describe it because the bliss experienced has totally effaced from your memory the modalities of your experience.

A *kriyaban* should make every effort to create the opportunity to grant himself the joy and the privilege of completing the recommended number of repetitions without every yielding to the temptation of hurried practices.

CHAPTER 10

KRIYA YOGA IN THE VISION OF SWAMI HARIHARANANDA

This particular form of *Kriya* has a structure similar to Lahiri's but it gives not so much weight to the action on the heart *Chakra*. At a certain point it seems to transcend the spine with its Chakras and take refuge at the top, at the upper part of the head. I find it not powerful but, with some intelligent choice – coupling it, as much as possible, with Lahiri's *Kriya* – it can guide you in a dimension of unspeakable beauty.

Swami Hariharananda explained us that the *Omkar* reality reveals to us as "Sound", "Light" and "Movement sensation." This was to me a great revelation. I am thankful for what I have learned at the feet of this Teacher.

In the following techniques the tongue is in the position of "*baby Kechari Mudra*."

FIRST KRIYA

First Kriya routine

Maha Mudra in two parts (Forward bendings and Maha Mudra proper)

Kriya Pranayama

Jyoti Mudra

Paravastha

Maha Mudra in two parts (Forward bendings and Maha Mudra proper)

In this school *Maha Mudra* is given with unsurpassed care, making *Omkar* realization almost tangible even to a beginner. This *Maha Mudra* is divided into two parts: the *Forward Bendings* and *Maha Mudra proper*.

Forward bendings

Sit on the pavement in the half-lotus position or on the heels. Exhale. Concentrate on *Ajna* in the center of your head. Through a deep inhalation (not too long) visualize the breath coming from the physical location of *Muladhara* up the spine until you complete the breath at *Ajna*. Hold your breath. Bend at the waist and preferably touch the floor with your head. (The head is placed in the region between the knees. Use your hands freely

in order to achieve this position comfortably.)

Gently breathe out and let the breath free. After touching the forehead to the floor, twist first to the right, nearing the right earlobe to the right knee. The head comes near the right knee, the face is turned toward the left knee so that it is possible to perceive a pressure on the right side of the head; a sensation of space is perceived inside the left side of the brain. Remain in this position for 3 to 30 seconds. Move head back to center until forehead touches ground. Then repeat the same exercise with the other side of your body, reversing the perceptions. Move your head until your left ear is directly over the left knee. Try to experience internal pressure in the left-side of your head; a sensation of space is perceived inside the right side of the brain. Remain in this position for 3 to 30 seconds. Then the head is placed in the region between the knees again, the face turned downward. A pressure is felt on the forehead. A sensation of space is perceived inside the occipital region.

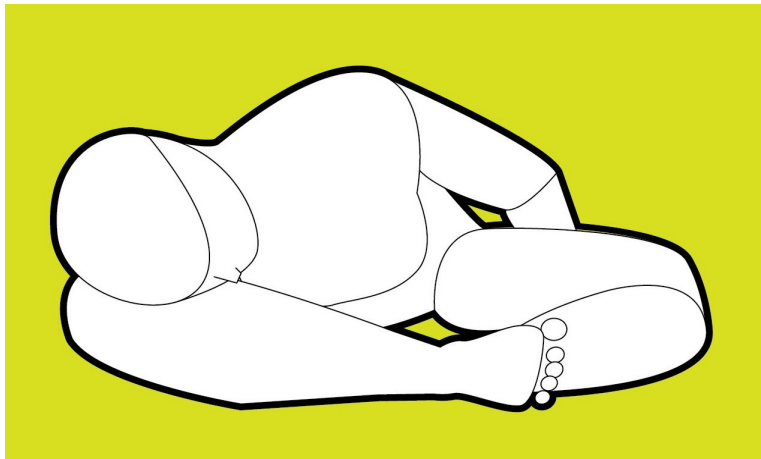


Fig.15 Forward bending. First position
[Sitting on heels is also OK!]

During this delicate process you are breathing normally and your awareness is mainly at *Ajna* while your eyes are focused on *Kutastha*. Then sit up straight, inhaling deeply. Through a long exhalation let the energy go down from *Ajna* to *Muladhara*. Through a deep inhalation visualize the breath coming from the physical location of *Swadhisthana* up the spine until you complete the breath at *Ajna*. Repeat all the previous process just as we have done for *Muladhara*. At the end through a long exhalation you guide the energy from *Ajna* to *Swadhisthana*. Then repeat the same process for *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishuddha* and *Medulla*. In this way you will enjoy six bows.

Note

To increase the power of this procedure, you can hold your breath when you are down. You will get a very strong sensation of energy rising up and intensifying in the point between your eyebrows. Breath retention is a powerful *Kundalini* stimulator. If you are not ready for the power generated by this procedure, if you feel like "spaced out" after your meditation or if you feel too much irritable, don't hold your breath.

When you bend your body left, your right nostril will open. When you bend your body right, your left nostril will open. When you bend your body in the front, you get equal pressure of flow of breath inside your nostrils. You get balance of the mind and calmness in your body. Your spinal chord passage will open.

The lunar channel of *Ida* is situated at the left side of the spine; the solar channel of *Pingala* is situated at the right side of the spine. Both chords cling to each other. By repeating the previous procedure, they are separated and, as a consequence, an hollow passage is opened between the two. The opening of the spiritual passage within the spine (*Sushumna*) is the starting point of the practice of meditation.

Maha Mudra

Bend the left leg under the body so the left heel is near to the perineum. Draw the right knee against the body so the thigh is as close to the chest as possible. The interlocked fingers are placed just below knee applying pressure to your internal organs. Take 5 to 6 very deep breaths with moderate pressure applied to knee. Then inhale deep and hold, extend the right leg, bow down, breath normally and massage the right leg from the foot to the thigh and hip.

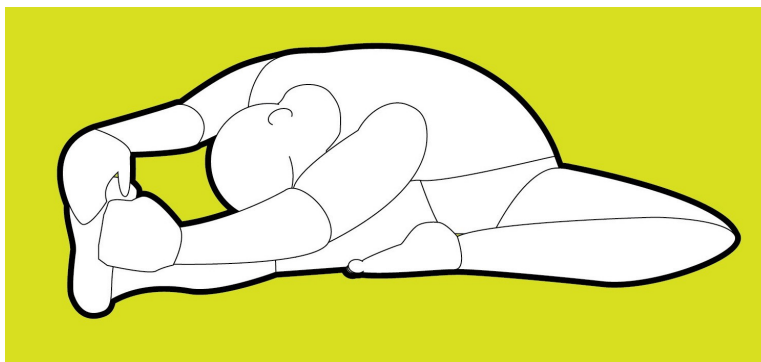


Fig.16 Here the face is turned to the left

Then grasp the right foot in this way: the right hand grabs the right toes

while the left hand grabs the inner side of the middle part of the right foot (the arch of the foot). The face is turned to the left. You perceive a sensation like an inner pressure on the right side of the head. It contrasts with the free space sensation in the left side of the brain. Chant *Om* six times in the point between your eyebrows. Then inhale and hold, sit back up onto your left foot with right knee folded into your chest, then exhale into normal conscious breathing.

Practice the whole procedure by reversing the perceptions and the position of the legs. I won't repeat everything – don't forget the chant of *Om* six times in the point between your eyebrows.

Now, draw both knees against your body. Extend both legs, bow down, breath normally and massage both legs from feet to thighs and hips. Then grasp both feet: right hand to right toes, left hand to left toes. Breathe normally, flex feet 4 or 5 times then relax with the head down as near to knees as possible. Experience internal pressure on the front part of the head. A sensation of space is perceived inside the occipital region. Chant *Om* six times in the point between your eyebrows. Then inhale, sit up and hold. Massage briefly toes, fold legs back to chest and exhale. As usual, this exercise is repeated three times.

Kriya Pranayama

With eyes closed, deeply inhale into *Fontanelle*. Then exhale into *Ajna*. Hold breath for few seconds (3-4) then inhale up to *Fontanelle*. Hold your breath for few seconds. Then exhale to *Vishuddha*, hold for a few seconds then inhale to *Fontanelle*. Hold your breath for few seconds. Then exhale to *Anahata* ... and so on. At a certain point you have reached the *Muladhara*. Hold your breath for few seconds. Then inhale to *Fontanelle*.

Now repeat in reverser order. Exhale down from *Fontanelle* to *Muladhara*. Hold your breath for few seconds. Then inhale to *Fontanelle*, hold your breath. Then exhale down to *Swadhisthana Chakra* ...pause... inhale... and so on until you exhale down from *Fontanelle* to *Ajna*. This is one cycle (12 breaths). You can repeat the whole cycle for a couple of times.

During the pause between inhalation and exhalation (the awareness is in *Fontanelle*) the breath should be held 2 to 3 seconds, but after several weeks of *Pranayama*, the time of each pause can be gradually increased up to 30 seconds. This detail is very important to create a deeper calmness.

Now then, this flute sound is one thing and the astral sounds is another thing. However, a long concentration upon the flute-like sound is the best action to listen to the internal astral sounds. These sounds come from the

activity of the *Chakras*. A great experience is hearing a distant sound of a long-sustaining bell (the sound of *Anahata*.) The experience of the "bell" changes into the sound of "many waters." This is the real sound of *Om* that guides the soul to travel through the spine, contacting the Divine Light in the upper part of the head. Lahiri Mahasaya described it as a sound "produced by a lot of people continually striking the disk of a bell and as continuous as oil flowing out of a container". Surely, when you hear the sound of running waters or of waves breaking over cliffs, you can be sure you are on the right track.

Modesty is always welcome but when this result is achieved, the positive euphoria is so overwhelming that it cannot be contained (like finding Aladdin's magic lamp.) In *Kriya* literature, it is said that those who realize a perfect *Pranayama*, can achieve everything through it. Well, if we dream of a faultless *Kriya Pranayama*, then what we have described matches the ideal of perfection.

A very important fact to understand is that the event of perceiving these sounds is not produced by the intensity of a unique moment of deep concentration but by the accumulation of effort manifested during daily sessions of *Kriya* (effort is the meticulous attention to any internal sound, no matter how faint). What is essential is to bring ahead a continuous will to listen internally. Each chanting of the syllable *Om* should be accompanied by an unswerving will to track down the echo of this vibration until you become aware of the astral sounds. Your listening skills will improve.

Those who are not able to hear any internal sound should not conclude something is wrong. Maybe they have done an enormous effort whose fruits will be enjoyed during the next day's practice or some day in the future. A sign one is heading in the right direction is a sense of mild pressure, like a sensation of liquid peace above or around the head often accompanied by a certain humming in the entire occipital region.

Jyoti Mudra

Close your ears with your thumbs while with the index fingers press lightly at the corners of the eyes or covering your eyes with a small pressure. Focus on *Kutastha*. Allow that part of your attention goes down in the *Muladhara*. Then ideally lift this *Chakra* through an inhalation to the point between the eyebrows. Hold the breath for as long as you feel comfortable (about 10 -15 sec) while trying to perceive the particular light of *Muladhara* in *Kutastha*. Exhale and ideally place *Muladhara Chakra* back down to its original position. Part of the attention moves now on the

second Chakra. Then do exactly what you have done with the *Muladhara Chakra*. Then thanks to a short exhalation, this Chakra is ideally brought back into its seat...

The same happens to the *Chakras* 3, 4, 5 and *Medulla*. Always try to see the light at the point between the eyebrows. Feel that you are offering each center to the light of the spiritual eye. To end the procedure, put the palms of your hands over the eyelids and remain there seeing a white Light for 2-3 min. When the Light disappears, lower your hands.

Paravastha

Paravastha is the state ensuing a good practice of *Kriya*. Remain longer in meditation listening to divine Sound, feeling the vibration and enjoying the divine Light. Perceive the focus of your concentration slowly rising from *Kutastha* to *Fontanelle* and above *Fontanelle* outside of the body. Remain without thoughts perceiving this inner sky which starts from the upper part of your head. When you come to the end of your meditation routine, open your eyes. Stare at what is before you but do not observe anything in particular. Watch without watching. Keep 99% of your attention to *Fontanelle*. After a while you will become aware of a subtle line of white Light, softened, as a fog, around all objects. The Light will become progressively white and greater. Avoid thinking. Keep the gaze fix. After 5 minutes close your eyes and rest for awhile before standing.

SECOND KRIYA

Second Kriya formal part

The hands, with fingers intertwined, rest on the abdomen. Inhalation and exhalation are fragmented into 6 + 6 parts. Starting with your chin on the chest, inhale, moving your awareness upwards along the spinal column. Simultaneously, slowly raise the chin as if to accompany the energy and push the energy up. The syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya*) are mentally placed in each *Chakra* location, while making a short pause in each. During the first "sip" of inhalation, the concentration is on the *Muladhara*, where the syllable *Om* is ideally "put"; during the second "sip", the concentration is on the second *Chakra*, where the syllable *Na* is ideally put ... *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in *Bindu* (*medulla* is not ideally hit.) Now the inhalation is completed and the chin is horizontal.

Hold the breath and practice *Kechari Mudra* as best as you can. The head bends forward towards the throat cavity: the divine Light flows down from

above into the occipital region of the brain (therefore in the part of your head that is turned towards the ceiling.) After feeling this for a second or more, resume the normal position and immediately bend the head slightly toward the left shoulder, without turning the face. The previous experience of the divine Light infusion happens again in the right part of the head.

Resume the normal position and bend the head slightly backwards: the experience of divine Light happens in the frontal part of the head. Then bend your head toward the right shoulder... the experience of divine Light happens in the left part of the head. Close the round by repeating the first movement.

After concluding one rotation of the head, exhalation starts. The exhaling breath is divided into six punctuated parts or pulses. While lowering the chin at a slow pace, the awareness comes down along the spinal column. The syllable *Te* (usually is the final "e" is lengthened: *Teeee*) is placed in *Medulla*, *Va* in the fifth *Chakra*... and so on ... *Su*... *De*... *Va*, until *Ya* (lengthened: *Yaaaa*) is mentally chanted in the *Muladhara*. If this is comfortable make a short pause after exhalation. During it, the awareness makes a complete, counter-clockwise turn around the *Muladhara Chakra*.

What I have described is called by me *Omkar Pranayama* – in order to avoid saying: "*Second Kriya formal part*."

The timing of one *Omkar Pranayama* depends on the individual: usually it is approximately 45-50 seconds but from a certain point onwards, the speed of each repetition of *Omkar Pranayama* slows down. The breath is "sucked in" and seems to be dissolved. From that moment onwards, all the physical details are only hinted.

You have probably read that in a deep *Pranayama*, the energy crosses the *Chakras* just like the thread of a necklace passes through the pearls. It may also happen that the "thread" of energy envelops each "pearl". The counter clockwise rotation of awareness around the crown (induced by the experience of Light coming down from above) can be also perceived in small dimensions winding around the *Medulla*.

When exhalation begins and you mentally chant *Teeee*, you can use the starting instants of exhalation to intensify the psychic pressure around the *Medulla*. This internal action is extended in a natural way to the other *Chakras*. The path of descent becomes a "helix" that surrounds and creates pressure around each *Chakra*. Go slowly and do not be in a hurry and let the process proceed at its own pace.

Second Kriya informal part

The breath is natural (as in *mental Pranayama*.) In each *Chakra* we shall mentally repeat its associated syllable many, many times. In *Muladhara* repeat *Om, Om, Om, Om, Om...* about 36 times. (Do not use *Mala* to count – remain immobile.) The speed at which you chant the syllables is about two per second. Visualize that *Chakra* as a horizontal disk, having a diameter of approximately one inch. Visualize these syllables moving on the surface of the disk in counterclockwise direction, near the circumference.

Then focus on the second *Chakra* where you will do exactly the same action, utilizing the second syllable of the *Mantra*, namely: *Na, Na, Na, Na, Na...* about 36 times. Then focus on the third, repeating *Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo....* about 36 times. Then focus on the fourth, repeating *Bha, Bha, Bha, Bha ...* then on the fifth (*Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga*), then on *Bindu* (*Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba*).

Now practice the five bents of the head but in a slower way.

The chin bends forward, towards the throat cavity: the divine Light flows down from above the head (seat of the Eternal Tranquility) into the occipital region of the brain. After feeling this for about 10-20 seconds, resume the normal position and bend the head slightly toward the left shoulder, without turning the face. The previous experience of the divine Light infusion happens. Divine Light flows down from above the head into the right part of the brain. Remain in this position for about 10-20 seconds, then resume the normal position. Now the head bends backwards: the same experience happens and divine Light flows down into the frontal part of the brain. Remain in this position for about 10-20 seconds, then resume the normal position.

Now the head bends slightly toward the right shoulder, without turning the face. The same experience happens and divine Light flows down into the left part of the brain, then the spine and the body....

To close the round, the chin bends forward, towards the throat cavity: the same experience happens The head then resumes its normal position.

You have perceived Light and divine blessings in each of the four parts of your brain. In this way, the spiritual Light will gradually pervade each atom of the upper part of your head.

Then focus on *Medulla* repeating many times *Te, Te, Te, Te, Te ...* The absorption state is really strong. Then you will focus on the fifth *Chakra* utilizing *Va, Va, Va*

...then fourth.... third second *Muladhara*.

Going up this way from *Muladhara* to *Bindu* and coming down repeating the same procedure is one round: the time required is approximately 4-6 minutes. Repeat 3-4 times and then be lost in the meditative state.

Key points

[1] Moving from one *Chakra* to the next, a *kriyaban* begins to notice the change of the light vibration in the region between the eyebrows. Later, you will have the experience that a specific sound comes from each center. Being absorbed in listening to astral sound creates inner bliss, putting aside – at least momentarily – our Ego consciousness. This is the moment when the *Omkar* reality is revealed.

[2] After completing this procedure, the upper part of the brain will remain ideally in the space, separated from the physical body. Swami Hariharananda said that this procedure ends in "cracking the coconut." The coconut is the head, whose upper part will be detached from the lower part. You must actively cooperate to reach this result. You must "invite" the divine energy to pervade the frontal, lateral and back part of your head.

During the day remain in this state as much as you can. Whenever you can withdraw for a short meditation, tune yourself with the Sound, Light, formless power of the Divine rotating inside the cranium.

Employment of the 50 letter-sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet

Swami Hariharananda took the decision of teaching a practice typical of the *Tantric Hatha Yoga*. It was taught for a certain number of years, later he put it aside. In my opinion it is interesting to give just a hint to it. This procedure is meant to help the seeker to perceive the Divine Energy in the *Chakras* and in the different parts of the body

In each Chakra

The 50 letter-sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet will be chanted visualizing the petals of each *Chakra*. There is no breath control.

Start with Hang Kshang in *Ajna Chakra*: Hang in the left hemisphere of the brain and Kshang in the right. Then place the 16 vowels in the *cervical Chakra* (Ang Aang Ing Iing Ung Uung Ring Rring Lring Lring Eng Aing Ong Oung Aung Ah) – you chant each letter only once, the same for all the following Chakras. In this practice you visualize each *Chakra* as a vertical disk radiating Divine Light through its petals. Visualize the number of

petals assigned by *yogic* tradition in clockwise direction. Then place the first 12 consonants in *heart Chakra* (Kong Khong Gong Ghong Wong Chong Chhong Jong Jhong Neong Tong Thong), chant the following 10 in *Manipura* (Dong Dhong Nong Tong Thong Dong Dhong Noing Pong Phong), then the following 6 in *Swadhistan* (Bong Bhong Mong Jong Rong Long) and finally the last 4 in *Muladhara* (Vong Shhong Shong Song). In each *Chakra*, you start from upper left go down left and come up from the right part. Three cycles are recommended. Close repeating the two letters Hang Kshang in *Ajna*.

In the crown of the head

The 50 letter-sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet are spiraled around the cranium, activating the *Omkar* sound which is perceived in the center of the brain – in the so called "Cave of *Brahma*", the seat of the pituitary and of the pineal gland. You start from the back of the crown, begin with the vowels, then the consonants. Make all the tour counterclockwise, then repeat clockwise. Twelve couple of rotations (6+6) are recommended. The good effects of this procedure are easily to be perceived and therefore this procedure is perceived as "heaven sent."

In different parts of the body

The 50 letter-sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet are placed in the 50 parts in which the human body [according to the tantric tradition] can be divided. No breath control. Put your hand on the different parts of your body that we shall describe, uttering distinctly at the same time the appropriate letter for that part.

1 ANG Forehead	2 AANG Mouth	3 ING Left eye	4 IING Right eye
5 UNG Left ear	6 UUNG Right ear	7 RING Left nostril	8 RRING Right nostril
9 LRING Left cheek	10 LLRING Right cheek	11 ENG Inner mouth (without touching)	12 AING Chin
13 ONG Upper lip and set of teeth	14 OUNG Lower lip and set of teeth	15 AUNG Forehead & top of head	16 AH Whole face (touching with both hands)
17 KONG Left shoulder	18 KHONG Left elbow	19 GONG Left wrist	20 GHONG Left knuckle
21 WONG Left finger joints	22 CHONG Right shoulder	23 CHHONG Right elbow	24 JONG Right wrist
25 JHONG Right knuckle	26 NEONG Right finger joints	27 TONG Left thigh joint	28 THONG Left knee
29 DONG Left ankle	30 DHONG Ball of the left foot	31 NONG Left toes	32 TONG Right thigh joint
33 THONG Right knee	34 DONG Right ankle	35 DHONG Ball of the	

right foot 36 NOING Right toes 37 PONG Left ribs 38 PHONG
 Right ribs 39 BONG Whole back (touch up and down) 40 BHONG
 Lower abdomen 41 MONG Upper abdomen 42 JONG Heart center
 43 RONG Left shoulder 44 LONG Back of neck 45 VONG Right
 shoulder 46 SHHONG From left shoulder to right hand 47 SHONG
 From right shoulder to left hand 48 SONG From left shoulder to right
 foot 49 HAM From right shoulder to left foot 50 AKSHAM Moving
 down the front of the body

Jyoti Mudra Second Kriya

During this practice you contract (and then relax) the muscles near the physical location of each *Chakra*. The position of the hands and fingers for this *Jyoti Mudra* is the same as in *First Kriya*: you stick your thumbs in your ears with the index fingers covering your eyes.

Become aware of the *Muladhara Chakra*. Contract the muscles near *Muladhara*: the back part of the perineum. Then lift this *Chakra* through an inhalation to *Kutastha*. Hold the breath for as long as you feel comfortable (about 10 -15 sec) while trying to perceive the particular Light of *Muladhara* in *Kutastha*. Relax the tension and exhale .

Then make a "leap of awareness" to the second *Chakra Swadhisthana* and contract the muscles of the sex organ and the sacrum. You can practice *Vairoli Mudra* (contract and relax both the urethral sphincter and the muscles of the back near the sacral center.) Then do exactly what you have done with the *Muladhara Chakra*...

When *Swadhisthana* is again in its initial position, place the focus of your awareness on the third *Chakra Manipura*. Tighten the muscles of the abdomen at the level of the navel: quickly contract and relax the navel, the abdominal muscles and the lumbar are of the spine. Then do exactly what you have done with the previous two *Chakras*...

Repeat the same scheme for *Anahata Chakra*. Expand the chest. Bring the shoulder blades together and concentrate on the spine near the heart. Feel the contraction of the muscles near the dorsal center. Then lift this *Chakra* through an inhalation to the point between the eyebrows. Hold etc.

Focus on the fifth *Chakra Vishuddha*. Move your head quickly from side to side (without turning your face) a couple of times, perceiving a grinding sound in the cervical vertebrae. This is only to localize the cervical center. Now contract the muscles of the back of the neck near the cervical vertebrae. To astrally locate Vishuddha Chakra we need a different

procedure. Inhale from the cervical center without particular muscle concentration to *Kutastha*. Now, holding your breath, practice the five inclinations of the head:

- a) turn the head to the left (the hands follow; the slight pressure upon ears and eyes does not change) the right elbow comes near the right breast,
 - b) turn the head to the right, the left elbow comes near the left breast,
 - c) return to the central position and bow the head forward;
 - d) bow the head back
 - e) then again in the front. Return to the normal position
- Exhale from *Kutastha* to the *Vishuddha Chakra*.

For *Medulla* we have the following procedure. Inhale very slowly from the base of the spine. During this inhalation, contract the muscles at the base of the spine, then the muscles near the sex organ, then the muscles near the navel and near the *Manipura Chakra*, then contract the muscles near the dorsal center, near the region of the throat and, finally, clench your teeth and put wrinkles in the forehead. see the light at the point between the eyebrows. Feel that you are offering your sixth center to God. Exhale and release the contraction.

For *Sahasrara Chakra* we have the following procedure. Inhale, contract all centers like we have done for *Ajna Chakra* then with teeth clenched, push the portion of your head which is above the eyebrows (cranium) up into the high heavens, offer it to God. Exhale, and release the contraction.

To end the procedure, put the palms of your hands over the eyelids and remain there seeing a milky white Light for 2-3 min. When the Light disappears, lower your hands and bow in the front and pray to the form of God you prefer. Open your eyes but remain concentrated inside, in the pituitary gland and see the divine Light in all things. Then enjoy *Paravastha* as in the *First Kriya*.

THIRD KRIYA

Here starts the meditation without action that happens in the upper part of the brain where the dimension of *static Prana* reigns. Obviously, there is always a minimum of action: only in the final state of *Samadhi* (the last of these six phases) there is properly no action.

Brain orbit forgetting breath. With physical movement

The breath is natural, not controlled. Practice *Kechari Mudra* to the best of your ability. Bend your head forward. Feel the energy present in the frontal region of your head and mentally vibrate *Bha* there. Without raising your

chin to normal position, guide slowly your head in the position in which the head is bent toward the left shoulder – as if you try touching the left shoulder with your left ear. Feel the energy present in the left side of the brain (over your left ear) and mentally vibrate *Ga* there. From this position, guide slowly both your head and the flow of energy backwards in the occipital region of the brain. Mentally vibrate *Ba* there. Slowly guide your head in the position in which the head is bent toward the right shoulder – as if you try touching the right shoulder with the right ear. Mentally chant *Tee* on the right side of the brain (over your right ear.) Always feel the flow of energy moving to each position. Slowly return to initial position with the head bent forward. Mentally vibrate *Ba* there.

Now, slowly straighten your head and return with chin parallel to the ground while your attention moves toward the central part of your brain under *Fontanelle*. Mentally vibrate *Su* there. This completes the first round. Repeat this practice 12 times.

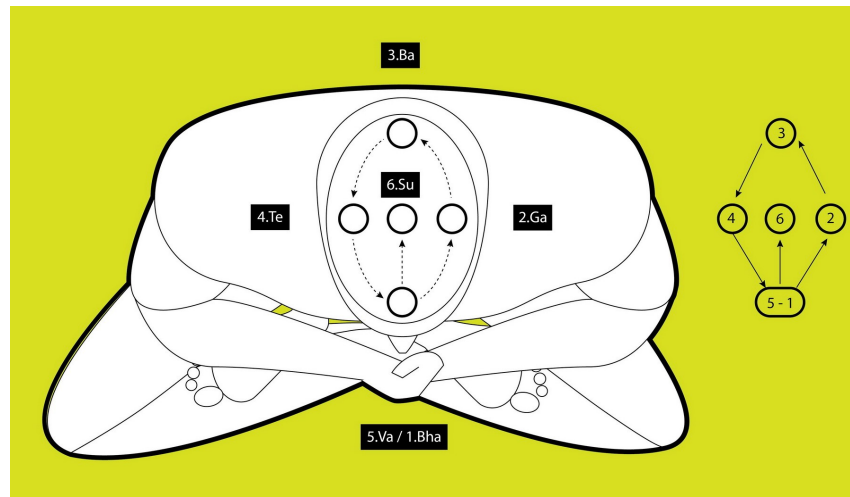


Fig.17 Circulation of calm Prana in the upper part of the brain

This rotation of energy is, by some teachers, called *Thokar Kriya*. The reason is that during this practice the energy moves *with pressure* through the brain substance. Reflect: *Thokar* has not the unique meaning of "*blow*" but also that of "*touching with pressure*." This internal pressure, this friction, creates the Divine Light manifestation.

FOURTH KRIYA

Brain orbit – immobility

After having completed the required number of rotations, it is not difficult to move to this last part in which the energetic movement happens in immobility.

Breath naturally. Repeat mentally, without hurry and without moving your head, the syllables *Bha, Ga, Ba, Te, Ba, Su* trying to perceive the same energetic movement you have previously induced. A ball of Light is turning inside your brain. After each round, this Light comes internally under *Fontanelle*. Practice about 36 rounds during each *Kriya* routine.

Note

These two last practices create a very strong effect. In a merciless way you become aware of the ego's subtle tricks that drive human actions. The reason for many wrong decisions appears with a definitive clarity, free of all covering veils. The ego is a very complicated mental structure: it is not possible to destroy it, but it can be made transparent. There is a price to pay: there might appear (hours after the practice) inexplicable waves of fear, the sensation of not knowing where you are and where you are directed to. This is a natural reaction coming from some subtle layers of the brain you have touched.

If you feel unfocused or spacey – as if you were under the influence of drugs, experiencing a state of too much *detachment* from the world and from *worldly things* – then it is wise to complete the practice with some repetitions of *Second Kriya*, both the formal part of it (6 repetitions) and the informal part (3 repetitions.)

Brain orbit – comprehensive practice

This practice is the happy crowning of the effort done with the two previous techniques. It makes the cosmic sound of *Om* to naturally rise and be perceived by your enchanted awareness. You will listen only to this. Therefore the mental chanting of *Bha Ga Ba Te Va Su* is of no utility. The same will happen with the following three last procedures. You will focus only upon *Omkar* sound and won't need any *Mantra* chanting.

Focus on *Muladhara*. Inhale deeply and ideally lift this *Chakra* in the central part of the brain, under *Fontanelle*, over *Ajna Chakra*. Visualize that *Chakra* as a disk, large as the circulation of energy that you have previously created.

Feel that the air is squeezed from the abdomen and stored in the upper part of the lungs. Hold your breath and start to put into motion the rotation of the energy in the head just as you have learned to do previously. The rotation of the energy happens in the head but, at the same time, it happens also around the real location of the *Muladhara Chakra* at the base of the spine. Hence, two rotations of energy happen at the same time: it seems difficult but it will become natural. [Remember also that at the end of each circle, the flow of energy is directed inside toward its center.]

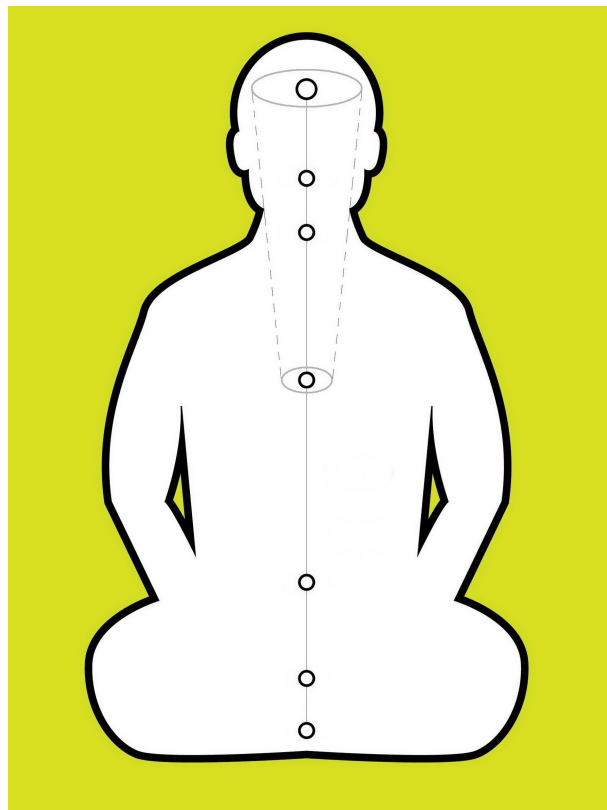


Fig.18 Here we are acting upon the heart Chakra

The ideal number of rotations associated with each *Chakra* is 36 but a beginner is contented with a smaller number. Usually the need to breathe will disappear. Exhale when you need to exhale and guide the *Muladhara Chakra* back to its location at the base of the spine.

Fig.18 This is the moment in which the Fourth Chakra is lifted. You see the circulation of energy in the upper part of the head and, at the same time, around the heart Chakra

Inhale raising the second *Chakra* and repeat the procedure. Repeat the procedure for each *Chakra* up to *Ajna*. Repeat it again for *Ajna* and then for

all the other *Chakras* down to *Muladhara*. The practice ends by breathing freely, putting all the attention in the *Fontanelle*. Peace, internal joy, breathless state, listening to internal sounds, perceiving the spiritual Light... this is what you will experience. Your practice of *Kriya* will become a love story with Beauty itself. Be sure, be confident: after a certain period of time, a remarkable experience of *Kundalini* awakening will happen. It will overcome you when you rest in the supine position. Without experiencing any start of surprise, you will find yourself ferried from a sweet dream to an authentic heaven; you will return to daily life with tears in your eyes – tears born of endless devotion.

When you master this procedure – when effortless *Kumbhaka* stabilizes and you are able to experience 36 (complete) rotations of *Prana* in your brain for each *Chakra*, namely 432 rotations of energy during 12 *Kumbhaka* – then you will perceive the entire universe filled with the effulgence of Divine Light. The effect is that during the day, a state of never before experienced clarity of mind will surprise you. The foundation of your consciousness will be perceived as a continuous joy, having no reason whatsoever.

Note

It is perfectly natural to approach this practice by slightly rotating your head (and also by mentally chanting the six syllables of the *Mantra*.) Although this is not required, this might be useful for beginners. If this happens, try to move gradually toward physical immobility and toward listening to actual *Omkar* Sound.

FIFTH KRIYA

Dissolve the breath in Brahmalo

The 8th *Chakra* is the door that puts you in contact with your astral body. Its opening involves the cleansing of what holds you to the cycle of death and rebirth, namely worn-out psychological patterns. It is the center of spiritual compassion and spiritual selflessness. A *kriyaban* who realizes the essence of this *Chakra* becomes completely selfless and lives with compassion rather than judgment.

Some *Kriya* or *Kundalini Yoga* teachers explain that this *Chakra* is located 5-6 cm. over Fontanelle. Other locations are given: 8 cm., 30 cm., 60 cm. We must trust our perception. Let us sweetly swing our trunk and head from side to side with the focus of attention over our head until we feel this *Chakra*. That is the right location!

Inhale, slowly drawing *Prana* from *Muladhara* to the *8th Chakra*. During this procedure, don't focus on any other *Chakra* in the spine. Move up feeling distinctly that the energy crosses the *Fontanelle* and reaches the *8th Chakra*. Concentrate there and enjoy the equilibrium state between inhalation and exhalation. Exhale sweetly, letting *Prana* descend from the *8th Chakra* to *Muladhara*. (Feel distinctly that the energy, coming down, crosses the *Fontanelle*.) When you feel the need to inhale repeat the procedure. Repeat again and again until the state of your consciousness is totally changed and your breath is very subtle, almost non-existent.

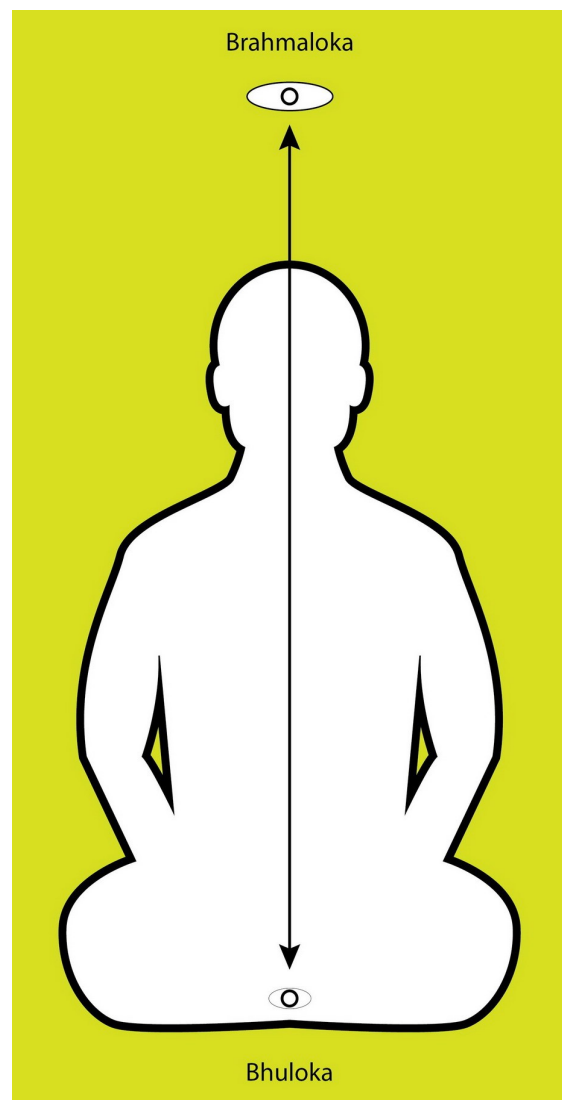


Fig.19 The breath moves between Bhuloka and Brahmaloka and then dissolves

Now inhale sweetly from *Muladhara* to the *8th Chakra*, raising breath and *Prana*. Exhale sweetly from the *8th Chakra* down the spine, *but do not come down intentionally to the Muladhara Chakra*. You will see that the exhaling current reaches spontaneously a certain point in the spine. This

point is not necessarily one of the different *Chakras*. Wherever this point is, it is fundamental to feel it clearly inside the spine. This point *becomes the starting point of the next inhalation*. Inhale then from this new starting point into the *8th Chakra*. The current comes up through the spine: now the length of the path is obviously shorter. Pause there. Exhale sweetly down the spine: probably the exhaling current makes a shorter path, shorter than the previous. This is the new starting point. Inhale from this new position upwards...

By repeating this procedure, you will reach a particular mental and physical condition in which you will remain breathless, *with total focus on the 8th Chakra*. If, after a long pause, the breath appears again, repeat the process from the beginning (inhaling from *Muladhara*). Go ahead patiently, unperturbed. The point is to make the breath cease, entering a dimension where it is no longer necessary.

SIXTH KRIYA

Meditation upon the light in Cerebellum

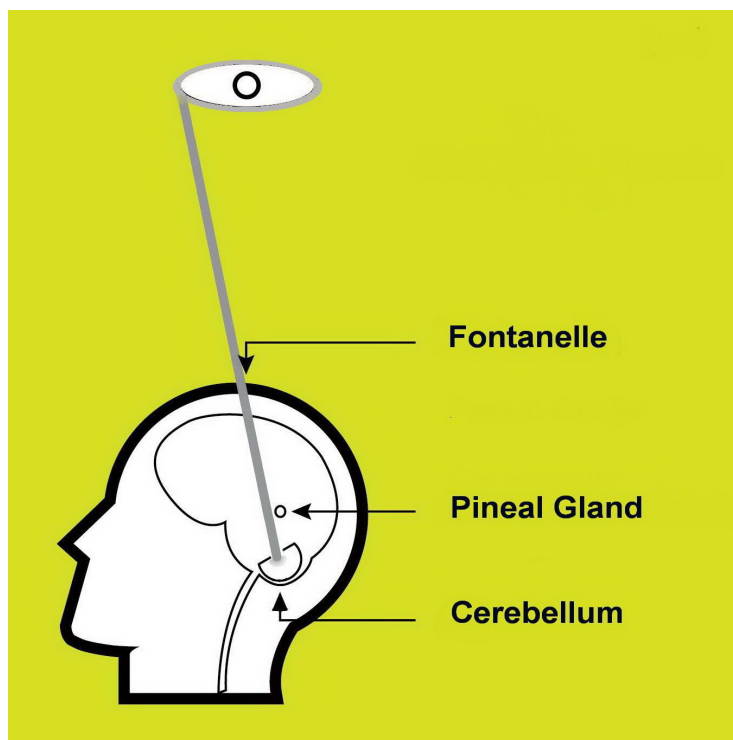


Fig.20 The Light moves from the 8th Chakra to Cerebellum

Rotate your awareness around the *8th Chakra*. Perceive a ball of Light that makes a circulation around your *8th Chakra* and then touches the center of this *Chakra*. Repeat many times this perception without any mental chanting of *Mantra*. Let the ball of Light do not come inward after tracing one circle but come down, piercing the *Fontanelle* at an angle.

While the ray is coming down raise your chin and feel the ray of Light reaching your *Cerebellum*. Remain immobile for a few seconds, wholly immersed in the intensity of the dazzling white Light shining from there to the whole brain. Lower your chin without losing the concentration upon the Light. Rest a moment there, and then repeat the procedure. Gradually during the next days repeat the experience more and more times. The Divine Light becomes stable at the *Cerebellum*.

Meditation upon the light shining in the Pineal Gland

Perceiving constantly the Divine Light in *Cerebellum* is a very high state, but you must learn how to go beyond it. Our goal is to learn to locate your *Pineal Gland* and enter it.

In order to achieve this goal, intuitively condense all the Light in *Cerebellum* and direct it toward your *Pineal Gland*. This gland is located very near the *Cerebellum*, but slightly forward and above it, along a line forming a 60° angle (with the pavement.) A substantial help comes by doing a movement like the one utilized to obtain the coming down of Light and focusing it in the *Cerebellum*, but more slow and almost imperceptible. The movement should be only hinted, with no muscular tension at all. The last immersion in the Light happens after this slight movement, when you are almost immobile: there is a sort of internal tension that guides you intuitively toward the *Pineal Gland*.

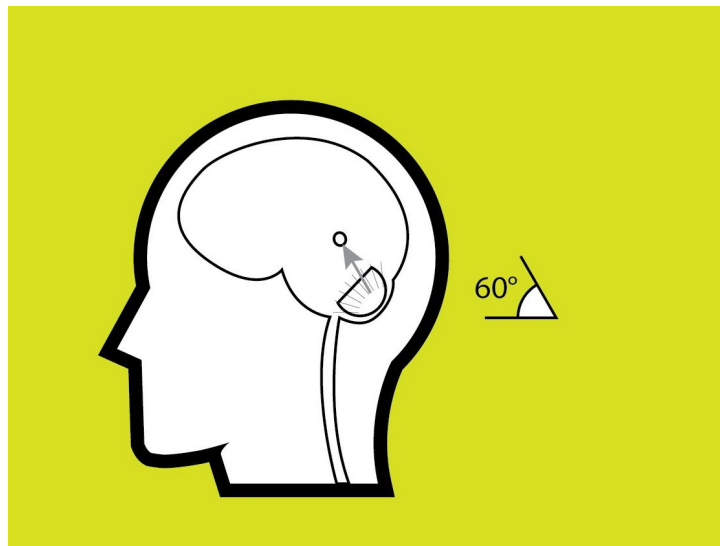


Fig.21 The Light moves from the Cerebellum to the Pineal gland

Repeat and repeat your attempt until you succeed in entering the *Pineal Gland*. Here the union with the Divine takes place. The state of TAT TVAM ASI manifests. During this time of divine oneness, one is devoid of body consciousness and unaware of one's surroundings.

After the Omkar sound ceases to exist
the Effulgent Form appears.

Nothing exists except the Sun of the Soul.

I, Shama Churn, am that Sun. (*Lahiri Mahasaya*) ¹⁰

¹⁰ Lahiri Mahasaya is Shama Churn – Shyama Charan. This sentence is contained in Lahiri Mahasaya's diaries. Many sentences from the diaries are to be found in the

CHAPTER 11

DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS OF PY'S CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

This appendix is devoted to those students who are serious about going ahead on the *Kriya* path utilizing only the techniques that can be obtained by the organizations that spread PY's teachings.¹¹ Apart from the technique of *Kechari Mudra*, often quoted in PY's writings and surely practiced by him, they don't feel the necessity of mixing PY's techniques with other spiritual procedures. They feel they are PY's disciples and believe that by adopting other teachings is equivalent to betray him.

When I followed PY's teachings, our "Meditation counselor" explained that the worst evil was disloyalty toward *Guru* and his organization. With the term "disloyalty" she meant even just reading what other persons who left the organization had written about *Kriya Yoga*.

After posting my book online, I had an intense email exchange with various researchers faithful to PY. After having clarified that they did not approve my decision to write in such explicit way Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* techniques, they asked me how I can be sure that PY had simplified or modified some details of the *Kriya* procedures. Trying to perceive what was stirring in their heart and mind, I felt that their worry consisted in the possibility they had missed something important, for example techniques not contained in the correspondence course, that PY could have shared only with some intimate disciples.

Those *kriyabans* were very serious, honest, deeply motivated. No nonsense would ever slip out of their mouths. I learned to listen to them respectfully and silently whenever they corrected some of my fancy interpretations of *Kriya Yoga*. Many, without being exhibitionist, were able to quote by heart many passages from the works of PY.

book *Purana Purusha* by Dr. Ashok Kumar Chatterjee

¹¹ The *Kriya* techniques as taught by PY [Some people do not consider them exactly equal to those of Lahiri Mahasaya. They are not here described in detail, but freely commented according to my personal experience – for what its worth.] I give it for granted that the reader knows PY's techniques in detail. In order to avoid confusion, I will denote them in the following way: PY's First *Kriya*, PY's Second *Kriya*.....

They had studied all the *Kriya* material written or dictated by PY and often remembered verbatim key quotations from that material. They had read and re-read through those texts several times trying to decode them.

They always struck me with their extraordinary commitment to a regular practice of *Kriya*. Although unsatisfied with their understanding of the subtle mechanism underlying the *Kriya* procedures and tormented by many doubts, they never dismissed the practice. It was clear that they were following the *Kriya* path not for esoteric curiosities, not to find an alternative cure to anxiety, depression but for one reason only: to follow and realize the spiritual path so fascinatingly delineated in PY's autobiography.

The greatest part of our discussions concerned the *Higher Kriyas*. This is perfectly explainable. To many *kriyabans* the crisis with their *Kriya* organization began when their request of having a seminar on the *Higher Kriyas* received an incomprehensible, anachronistic "NO".

The purpose of that seminar had to be not only to demonstrate the technical details but also to give a theoretical scheme, providing devotees with resources to conceive – and subsequently improve – their routine. Every student wanted at least to see how such techniques were performed. Each technique included some physical movements: if you study them only from a written text, you are never sure about your correct performance.

The meetings organized to review the basic teachings (*Kriya proper* plus *Hong So* and *Om techniques*) were always a source of inspiration. The disappointment of not getting this opportunity also in the field of the *Higher Kriyas* was unbearably bitter.¹²

We had inspiring conversations. The purpose of this appendix is to refer in synthesis the main points of those conversations. I am confident they contain interesting information.

¹² We know that recently a couple of the organizations based upon PY's legacy proved they had understood that it doesn't pay to behave in such a way and are giving regular initiation into the *Higher Kriyas*.

The synthesis is divided into four parts:

[I] A rational approach to Yogoda and First Kriya techniques.

[II] A rational plan to work with the Higher Kriyas starting from PY's Third Kriya.

[III] The control of the mind during the day is a necessary prerequisite to master Pranayama (control of energy.)

[IV] Work with PY's Second Kriya till the last days of your life

[II] A RATIONAL APPROACH TO YOGODA AND FIRST KRIYA TECHNIQUES

There are different ways of planning a *Kriya* routine. We discuss here a *Kriya* routine where the well known techniques of *Hong So* and *Om* are practiced at the end.

[1] Maha Mudra

[2] Kriya Proper

[3] Repeating Maha Mudra. Jyoti Mudra

[4] Meditation. Choose one of the following:

[Med.1] Focus in Kutastha

[Med.2] Focus in Kutastha with Hong So Mantra

[Med.3] Focus in the spine with Hong So Mantra

[Med.4] Om meditation technique (closing the ears)

Let us comment each point

[1] Maha Mudra

Some *kriyabans* prepare *Maha Mudra* with the "Forward Bendings" by Swami Hariharananda. [The teachings of Swami Hariharananda are discussed in Chapter 10.] Other complete the balancing action of *Maha Mudra* with the classic breathing exercise *Nadi Sodhana Pranayama*. If you test these two optional additions, you will never forget them.

[2] Kriya Proper. Kriya with open or closed mouth. Value of both. Kechari Mudra. Mental of chanting of Om in each Chakra.

Both methods (*Kriya* with open, semi closed or closed mouth) are good. The logic order is: first mouth open then closed. The hypothesis that only open mouth *Pranayama* causes the energy to flow through the *Sushumna* channel – implying that the lateral currents of *Ida* and *Pingala* have no role – is baseless. Breath and energy move in *Sushumna* only when the

breath is subtle, internalized and this happens after a great effort of concentration and relaxation.

Many *Kriya* students know that a few direct disciples of PY practiced with mouth closed. As for *Kechari Mudra* I was glad to see that a good number of *kriyabans* had achieved it – some having applied the classic exercise of *Talabya Kriya* from my book, others by following the tips found in a *Yoga* web site.¹³

One of my *kriyaban* friends had a strange opinion: he stated that *Pranayama* with *Kechari* was too "weak", being deprived of the strong sensations in the spine that you feel with mouth *Pranayama*. It was clear that this friend had tormented himself for a long time before taking his decision to give up *Kechari Mudra*.

Now reviewing that episode, I think that the problem was the purity, the beauty of the sounds of the breath obtained with the open or semi closed mouth. He experimented that with the mouth perfectly closed and found that the sound of the breath was not so pure and strong. At that time he had not the information that with the mouth closed and the tongue in *Kechari Mudra* (even baby *Kechari*) the sound was destined to become clean like that of a flute. I was not able to explain that this "flute" sound was experienced only after years of committed practice. This information was found later. We had not clear in mind that the flute-like sound appears only when the spine is "clean" like an empty tube.

During the first *Kriya* breaths (unless you have mastered the *Samadhi* state), even if your concentration is perfect, it is clear that the mind, the breath and the *Prana* have not totally entered *Sushumna*! *Ida* and *Pingala* do have a role. When they are balanced, *Sushumna* current start to manifest. You feel this when your awareness start to detach from the external, physical word and is attracted by the spine and the joy of internal breathing.

Mouth *Pranayama* has the remarkable power of granting a clear cold and warm sensations in the spine, therefore it is reasonable to start *Kriya Pranayama* in this way.

¹³ PY in his writings and in his talks gave the definition of *Kechari Mudra* without introducing any practical exercises to be performed over a certain period of time in order to achieve it. [I discuss *Kechari* in *Chapter 7* of my book.]

Curiosity 1: elliptic path

In AOY we read that: "The *Kriya Yogi* mentally directs his life energy to revolve, upward and downward, **around** the six spinal centers.... One-half minute of revolution of energy around the sensitive spinal cord ..." This does not match with the technique we had received. How is it possible? Not everyone knew that there were two versions of the *Kriya proper*, one taught in 1930 and the, more recent, definitive one.

In my opinion a serious *kriyaban* should know and have experience of both versions. The first one matched perfectly that description. Having found that version online, many practice in that way. I suppose that who reads this appendix knows well both.

Curiosity 2: a definitive help to prepare the spine for the practice of Kriya proper procedure.

Some *kriyabans* reminded me [actually I found this information in the correspondence course but then forgotten] that PY explains how a *kriyaban* can gently sway the spine of few centimeters to the left and to the right: in this way he/she succeeds in perceiving the astral spine as separated from the physical one. He also taught to move the consciousness along the spine while mentally chanting *Om* in the location of each *Chakra*. These two teachings are very simple but the result can leave you astonished! You wonder how came that they are not imparted during the *Kriya proper* initiation class.

[3] Repeating Maha Mudra. Jyoti Mudra.

The repetition of *Maha Mudra* at this point of the routine, helps to raise the *Kundalini* energy along the spinal tunnel. Coupled with *Jyoti Mudra* it helps to win a strong obstacle in the spine. I mean the knot of *Muladhara* – *Kutastha* called *Rudra Granti*. In other words, by repeating *Maha Mudra* and by practicing *Jyoti Mudra* you prepare yourself in the best of the ways for the meditation phase of your *Kriya* routine.

[Med.1] Focus on Kutastha

Let a certain number of natural breaths happen. "Natural" means without any effort to produce the sound in the throat and without any visualization concerning the movement of energy in the spine. Put your whole being in *Kutastha* in a way that nothing exist outside that "cave" of peace. [These breaths are not counted – forget also the time.] Maybe you have also cold and warm sensations in the spine, if his happens, enjoy them intensely. The more you do, the more your *Prana* is approaching to the *Sushumna*.

You are flying along the spinal tunnel towards a state of paradisiac tranquility. Your pacified mind will no more be an obstacle to perceive the Divine presence beyond your thoughts and individuality.

Unfortunately some prefer to remain immovable only, waiting for the time go by. This reminds me a person who is waiting that the shot of medicine given into a muscle by an injection spreads pacifically and be possible to stand up and walk without compromising the action of such treatment. I respect of course this choice [I respect any choice] but I feel my duty to speak sincerely. In my opinion a *kriyaban* often misses a wonderful tool, like, for example, *Hong So*.

[Med.2] Focus on Kutastha with Hong So Mantra

We know that PY taught two systems of spiritual practice. The first was the *Yogoda* system [*Recharging exercises, Hong So, Om meditation technique.*]

The second is the *Kriya Yoga* system [*Kriya proper, Maha Mudra, Jyoti Mudra plus Higher Kriyas.*] The *Yogoda* system derives from the religious movement *Radhasoami*, the second from Lahiri Mahasaya. The *Yogoda* system is not a simple preparation to *Kriya Yoga* but is a spiritual path complete in itself, effective and worthy of our total respect.

To practice them both, in the same routine, putting *Kriya Yoga* (which consists in the art of *Pranayama*) at the end or the routine is deeply wrong. This creates a big impoverishment of the practice.

The result is excellent if such fusion happens according to Patanjali's teachings. First the *Pranayama* stage, then the meditation practices. Only in this way these two systems can be merged into a unique, coherent system of practices.

A note about the Hong So technique

Often this technique is introduced as a procedure to develop concentration, actually this does not happen. The first consideration is that the *Hong So* technique does not give you as by magic the ability of concentration if you do not already possess it! The *Hong So Mantra* is not a "magical formula" that, when repeated many times, calms invariably the breathing process. [This techniques is also taught with *So* during inhalation and *Hong* during exhalation. You discover that the effect is the same.]

In order to see the power of this technique you must be endowed with the ability to maintain a high level of concentration during all the practice: only then the breath calms down. Usually, at this point of your routine, it is

not too difficult to enter that high-level-of-concentration state.

But be very careful: while you are watching your breath, never establish a rhythm in the mental chanting of *Hong So*! If by mentally chanting this *Mantra* you follow a rhythm, this rhythm will never settle down. If you relax your keen awareness of the breath and remain there as if hypnotized by the pleasing sound of the two syllables *Hong* and *So*, you shall be disappointed. Your mind will not be prone to being internalized and will not guide you to the state of calm breath. Don't permit that the implacable rhythm of the litany: "*Hong So, Hong So, Hong So, Hong So...*" marches onward like the clackerty clack of the wheels of a train.

If your body can physiologically stay off-breath for some instants or for long moments, the rhythm should not cause the breathing process continue implacably. If you don't let the pauses exist, then you will never realize you are in the condition of living the emancipating experience of the breathless state.

Be always very attentive to each pause. Respect it, have care of it, merge with it. Enjoy the beauty of this pause, no matter if it lasts just an instant!

Another point is important: the pause after inhalation is different from the pause after exhalation. In normal, not controlled, breathing there is the tendency to exhale immediately after inhalation. Inhaling, the rib cage expands and gets into an elastic tension. If there is no control, this elastic force, even if it is minimal, is released immediately after inhalation. If you want to practice the *Hong So* technique in the best of the ways, you should control the natural reflex to exhale as soon as the inhalation is completed. This is possible only in one way: after inhalation wait calmly and without any forcing the stimulus to exhale. Accept that the rib cage remains expanded and therefore in slight tension for some instants. When, after this pause, the stimulus to exhale appears, exhale. This slight tension, in this particular phase of the practice, is to be respected. Students who abide by the before said rules will soon verify, in a very impressive way, how the breath eases off.

[Med.3] Focus on the spine with Hong So Mantra

Visualize your breath going up and down the spine with *Hoooong* and *Soooo*. No control – your breath is free. You can go ahead in this way for some minutes, then, when the breath is so short that the procedure is on the verge of evaporating into nothing, try to feel this short breath happening in each *Chakra*. One short, almost invisible, but complete breath happens in *Muladhara* and is blended with the soothing chant of *Hong* and *So*. This

breath is like a peaceful vibration in a silent mind. Then place your concentration on the second *Chakra*: another breath happens there, then another breath happens in the third *Chakra* ... and so on... up and down along the spine... until there is no more breath, only *Hong So* like a micro movement, in each *Chakra*.

If you practice in this way, a "virtuous circle" between this growing calmness and the reduced necessity of oxygen will start. This leads to an extraordinarily result even for those who deem they are only clumsy beginners.

In time, this will lead you to enjoy a perfect breathless state. Then you will realize the truth contained in the words of a great disciple of PY. He said: "I have learned to live by inner joy." [The disciple was J.J.Lynn, called Rajarsi Janakananda.]

[Med.4] Om meditation technique (closing the ears)

Contrarily to what some students think, this technique works. But it works only if you practice as it is taught: in the recommended position, with arm rest, closing one's ears with your hands (no ear plugs) while mental chanting *Om* innumerable times, with total commitment to internal listening without ever discouraging. Often your hands seem paralyzed. You won't sense them anymore: this is the moment to keep on, undeterred.

Usually you do not notice the exact instant when you start listening to the internal sounds: at a certain point you notice you are already listening to them since some time. The internal sounds don't appear when the mind is active thinking, but only when it is perfectly void, even void of the I consciousness, void of the thought you are doing a certain practice. When you reach a total void (to some this state seems having entered the sleep state), when the repetition of the *Mantra* has created a transformation of your state of consciousness, you will be surprised by a certain indefinite internal sound. You will sweetly become aware of them.

Great experiences ensue from this meditation technique. But it is necessary to devote to this technique the necessary time it requires. Its good effects disappear entirely when you operate the unhappy choice of practicing a greater number of *Kriya breaths* and devote to it no more than ten minutes.

Sometimes a wrong choice of a *Higher Kriya* procedure, instead of cooperating with the process of calming the *Prana*, produces the contrary effect and the whole magic of the meditation state is lost.

One must understand that after the *Om technique* no other procedure should follow. There is a striking contradiction in the action of interrupting the listening of the internal sounds in order to practice any other procedure.

[III] A RATIONAL PLAN TO WORK WITH THE HIGHER KRIYAS STARTING FROM PY'S THIRD KRIYA

Facing the *Higher Kriyas* was not an easy task. I received from the organization an outwardly simple meditation technique called "*Second Kriya*". It was not based on some form of *Pranayama* but on the listening to the internal sounds. My first impression was that this procedure was the evolution of the *Om meditation technique*, part of PY's *Yogoda* system. I think that it is correct to call it: "*Technique to locate, physically and astrally, the seat of each Chakra*." However I didn't succeed neither in distinguishing the astral sounds of the *Chakras*, nor in perceiving the color of each one of them on the screen of *Kutastha*.

Surely the the reason of my failure was that this procedure happens in the best of the ways when the breath is subtle, when the meditative phase is already begun, rather very deep. As I have explained, it was then that I asked to my organization a live seminar on this practice and the response was negative. My state of disappointment and confusion came near to desperation.

In the course of the years, I do not think I have ever found a *kriyaban* that told me he was practicing regularly this technique. Some friends gave up completely the *Higher Kriyas*, other practiced occasionally only the *Third Kriya*.

The fact that this technique is noticeably different from the *Second Kriya* as handed down by the tradition created bewilderment in the heart and mind of some students. The hypothesis that PY had received this technique by Swami Kealananda (his Sanskrit teacher) seems plausible. Be that as it may, there were students who, only for this reason, felt deceived and dropped it without fully testing its potentialities. The idea that their *Guru* had deceived them by not giving the "true" *Second Kriya* originated a terrible conflict (I would say a true catastrophe from the emotive point of view) in their soul. Now I know that this conflict could have been mitigated by explaining that the traditional *Second Kriya* is PY's Third Kriya technique. The truth is that PY's *Second Kriya* is valuable – this point will be discussed in the last part of this Appendix

Driven by this situation (but not only because of it) some friends of mine visited a couple PY's *Ashrams* in India and contacted also some *Kriya Acharya* outside the organization. What happened is very difficult to summarize.

Many returned with their mind full of contradictory information. They told what seemed a visible exaggeration: the *Higher Kriyas* as they are practiced in PY's Ashram are completely different from what we practice through the correspondence course.

I put my trust in a friend, who lived every year for about one month in an Indian Ashram who was officially linked with PY's main *Kriya* organization. Over the course of many years, he talked with me about his experience.

He had received a great privilege: to meet and talk different times with an old disciple of Swami Satyananda Giri, disciple of Sri Yukteswar. The old man, who often paid a visit to the Ashram, did not give formal initiation to him, but encouraged him to follow faithfully PY's teachings.

One day, talking about the *Higher Kriyas*, this disciple hinted at the procedure of *Thokar*. My friend asked more details about this technique. The term "Thokar" was found also in the literature about Lahiri Mahasaya's original Kriya. The disciple said one thing that often comes back to me.

"Practicing *Thokar* is like grasping a tiger for queue – he replied – you will receive immediately a great power, but one day "the entire tiger" will come to you ... and perhaps you will not be able to hold all that power.

He continued explaining that *Thokar* was a procedure during which you give a strong stimulus to the *Muladhara Chakra*. This technique should not be practiced outside of an Ashram or without the direct guidance of an experienced *kriyaban*.

He also said that PY had shared this procedure only with six direct disciples.

My friend had a great respect for this person. When the old disciple left the body, my friend preferred to talk the bare minimum with the other persons

in the Ashram. So it was not easy to convince him to formally ask a revision of his *Kriya*. But accepted.

When he was back from India, I received him warmly. He said that the minister appointed for revision was surprised that he was requesting a check of his *Higher Kriyas*. This was quite uncommon. While listening from my friend a description of his *Second Kriya*, the minister was in trouble, being not able to pick out which technique my friend was describing. There was a moment of clear embarrassment. Then he recollected himself and gave a generic instruction about the movement of energy in the spine and on meditation in general.

My friend had however the impression that the monk was talking about PY's *Third Kriya*. In that perspective the words of the minister were perfect.

Next day the minister wanted to talk again with my friend. He apologized for having created some confusion. He said that when PY abandoned his body it was a shock for the entire organization. So many things were not decided. The correspondence course was not entirely completed. Some parts would be reconsidered in the future. The key problem was that PY knew that it was not correct, not possible to share some delicate instruction through the correspondence course. He (the minister) said that perhaps he received something slightly different from what my friend received.

He said that when people, who feel they are disciples of PY, are informed of those editorial difficulties, this should not be a problem. Either they have trust in their Guru, or everything is going to collapse.

At that time, I draw the following scheme:

Correspondence course	Kriya as some PY 's direct disciples (or Sri Y.'s direct disciples) received
"SECOND KRIYA" as conceived by PY	--- There is no trace of this ---
"THIRD KRIYA" as conceived by PY	--- is considered the real SECOND KRIYA, the most precious Kriya technique after Kriya Pranayama ---
"FOURTH KRIYA" as conceived by PY	--- it is a variation of the previous. It is called THIRD KRIYA ---
There is no other teaching, approved by PY, that can be learned from the correspondence course.	--- there is a variation of the previous two techniques envisaging a strong stimulus of Chakra Muladhara. It is said that Sri Y. had given this to a pair of disciples, while PY gave it to six persons ---

Now those who feel they are disciples of PY accept and practice what is written in the correspondence course. If PY chose to delete the teaching mentioned in the last line of the table, this means he (PY) had good reasons for doing so.

I think that PY hinted at this teaching, writing that the Chakras can be awakened by imparting in their location some "psycho physical blows."

The strategy that was discussed with my friends is now described:

[1] Master PY's Third Kriya by means of a natural, serious daily practice and, for those who have a great strength of will, by means of a special routine that we came to know later. A year of intense work is necessary. We can then experience with prudence the Fourth Kriya without ever abandoning the Third.

[2] Master PY's Second Kriya by mastering first the state of "Pranayama." We know that Pranayama is a state of consciousness and not a breathing

exercise. Achieving this state of consciousness is possible by a full control of the mind.

INCREMENTAL ROUTINE FOR PY'S THIRD KRIYA

There are two Incremental Routines concerning PY's *Third Kriya*. The first is a preparation for the second. As a rule these incremental routines are practiced once in life. This strategy comes from Satya Charan Lahiri, nephew of Lahiri Mahasaya.

First incremental routine

Being a preparatory routine, we will not apply the procedure of *Thokar* [Strong stimulation of some *Chakras* utilizing particular movements of the head coupled with holding the breath.] We shall work only upon one aspect of this *Third Kriya*: we shall master first the procedure of moving along the spinal tunnel. The ability one has achieved after years of *Kriya proper* is stoutly utilized in bringing *Prana* in the first *Chakra*, then guiding it slowly and intensely into the second *Chakra*... and so on *Chakra* after *Chakra*, up to the point between the eyebrows. Then we return back moving contrariwise. This must happen in a state of absolute immobility, mentally repeating the 12 syllables of the *Mantra* typical of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Higher Kriyas* of. [No movements of the head, no holding the breath. All the rest remains as per the received instructions. What we are doing is a *Kriya proper* deepened by the utilization of the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*.]

A key point is the gradual increase of the number of the repetitions: with this modality, what a *kriyaban* will experience will remain like a firm point for the whole life.

The plan of gradual increase starts with the practice of 25 repetitions of the technique every day, once a day, for two weeks. Then 50 repetitions a day for two other weeks. Then 75 repetitions a day for two other weeks... then 100... and so on, increasing of 25 in 25 until you practice 200 repetitions a day for two weeks. And then? Then you can rest for some days to get ready for the following incremental routine.

Second incremental routine

Now you can put in this exercise the ability obtained with the previous incremental process. You are ready to draw the best from the complete technique – the one you have received originally, with the movements of the head¹⁴

Start again with 25 repetitions of the complete procedure – "Complete" means: as per written lessons. Now a *kriyaban* knows how to raise the energy inside the spine and the quality of breathing has become more and more subtle, without decreasing of intensity, rather, increasing it. The *Kutastha* has become a magnetic, bright reality. The same *Kriya proper* has changed in refinement. The current in the spine seems to move spontaneously.

The incremental plan is the same: 25 repetitions of the technique every day, once a day, for two weeks. Then 50 repetitions a day for two other weeks.... 75 100... 125.....150 ...175200 for two weeks! The power that this plan can put into motion is indescribable.

Unfortunately if one has not the courage to overcome the 12 prescribed repetitions of the *Third Kriya*, will never realize the power contained in this technique! Increase therefore the number of repetitions, increase without fear and end your routine by trying any means to calm the breath and reach the breathless state.

However, be very cautious. Do the movements of the head in a very delicate way avoiding to stress the cervical vertebrae!

TWO WORDS ABOUT PY'S FOURTH KRIYA

Unfortunately, many in our group after receiving PY's *Third* and *Fourth Kriya*, were not able to resist the temptation of trying *Fourth Kriya* on the spot – "if it leads to *Samadhi*, why not try it now"? After about 15 - 20 rotations, *Kumbhaka* became stressful. Instead of giving up, we repeated a couple of times the same attempt, while discomfort increased while a feeling of nausea or dizziness goes on launching its alarm signals. Eventually we stopped, defeated. The gain was zero, less than zero! Not only we had not obtained the slightest trace of *Samadhi*, but we had lost the initial tranquil state.

¹⁴ We discussed also the fact that the movements of the head are not a "rotation of the head" they are a "triangular" movement.

[III] THE NECESSITY OF CONTROLLING THE MIND DURING THE DAY AS A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE TO MASTER PRANAYAMA (CONTROL OF ENERGY)

I did two great advertising campaigns in my life, one about the value of *Pranayama* (or *Kriya*) to fill our existence with happiness and beauty and one about the value of *Japa* to make the breath calm, hence to perfect the state of *Pranayama*.

Breath control and *Devotional Prayer* have always been for me the two instruments with which spiritual aspiration becomes reality in the life of any person. "Any" means both people who have always been attracted by the spiritual path and those people who do not even know what the spiritual path is.

Thinking about *Pranayama*, about the blessings that it has brought in my life, I remember the song (Bhajan) preferred by Sri Yukteswar:

*Desire, my great enemy,
With his soldiers surrounded me...*

.....

*What will be my fate?
Oh Lord, tell me.*

*Pranayam be thy religion,
Pranayam will give thee salvation,
Pranayam is Beloved God,*

....

*Control the little Pranayam,
Become all-pervading Pranayam,
You won't have to fear anything anymore.*

Now what needs a *kriyaban* to obtain perfection in the practice of *Pranayama*? Something must happen during the day, and must happen to their mind. If the mind is always active in useless thoughts, without ever pausing in a state of contemplation, then all the wealth created by the breathing exercises of *Pranayama* is dissolved

In order to live in a state of grace, you have to feel your mind as a solid and limpid substance like crystal. This is the state of real *Pranayama*. This happens through *Japa*. Can you make your mind acute only through

the strength of will? No, you can do it for half an hour and then all comes back as before. If you want a lasting, stable result, then you have to use *Japa*.

Sometimes *Kriya Pranayama* seems not to work at all. It can make life arid, it can make your words acid; you can radiate not love but bother and annoyance. Start with Devotional Prayer until it becomes automatic.

Unfortunately, many people buy spiritual books or New Age and cannot understand just one thing: how important it is to remain in the crystalline peace of murmuring your Mantra, your Prayer.

In this book I have dedicated three chapters to *Japa*. Yet many readers have not understood the importance of it. Some write me asking specific exercises to develop this or that virtue, while everything could be developed automatically by *Japa*.

The mind made transparent by *Japa* can obtain everything.

Saint Teresa of Avila (see chapter 13) said: "You can do nothing without Prayer and you can do everything with it." According to her: Prayer represents everything in the mystical path. There was no other practice on which she insisted so much in all her writings and to which she gave so much importance; according to her, the soul that does not create the habit of praying cannot reach the mystical goal; without this habit, one does not keep the mind at bay.

Continuous Prayer guides you to the state of breathlessness. How vast and supreme this experience is! In that state your whole body is sustained by calm Prana, the mind is a still substance. This is the state of Pranayama. If you open your eyes, everything you see is like a transparent and solid substance, it is your vast body, it is *Prana*.

Without *Japa*, the *Pranayama* is just an exercise and nothing else – with *Japa*, your *Pranayama* has a solidity without limits.

"Pranayam be thy religion" is exactly this.

In my opinion, only in this condition we can seriously start the practice of PY's *Second Kriya*.

[IV] WORK WITH PY'S SECOND KRIYA TILL THE LAST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

Now we aim at perfection in what we have worked upon so far. We have become familiar with PY's First, Third, and Fourth Kriya. Our effort has focused on the Pranayama procedure: now we renounce the use of the breathing process and work only with pure awareness. Our breath is very calm, we have learned to make it almost evanescent. Keeping the mind calm during the day had been the decisive factor.

The work we are going to do happens apparently in the spine, actually it happens in *Kutastha*. *Kutastha* has different layers, like an onion. We start by becoming aware of its outer layer which is ... the *Chakra Muladhara*!

This is not easy to understand. We will certainly continue to do what we have done for a long time, namely moving within the spinal tunnel. Yet now our intuition will fall into line with a new way of conceiving the reality of the spine.

We shall focus on the Muladhara and discover that we are in Kutastha, then focus on Swadhisthana and realize we are in Kutastha but in a subtler dimension, the same will happen with Manipura ... at some point we shall be in front of the white star in Kutastha..

While shifting the focus of concentration from *Chakra* to *Chakra*, we will refine our attunement to subtler vibrations.

Through the instruments of the *Third* and the *Fourth Kriya* we have cleaned the spinal tunnel and loosened most part of the subtle obstacle of the heart *Chakra* (*Hridaya Granti Ved.*)

One does not enter *Kutastha* with breath. For this reason a needed condition is that *Kriya*, in its various levels, has annihilated the breath.

PY's *Second Kriya* is the conclusion of the long phase of our path that happens when pure *Pranayama* is enriched with the *Bandhas* and with the great stimulation that happens through the procedure of *Thokar*.

The Tattwas

In PY's *Second Kriya* we force our concentration upon each *Chakra* until the essence of each of them is revealed. To say that we will meet the essence of the *Chakras* means that we shall also meet the essence of the *Tattwas* (that is, the 5 elements.) Indeed the first five *Chakras* preside over the 5 elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether. One may think that this is part of Indian philosophy. Well, what will happen in our experience is touching, feeling, realizing these five elements.

In *Kriya*, subtle experiences take place, and what will happen is described very well by PY in his correspondence course. He explains very clearly the physical changes that occur in our bodies depending on the predominance in our consciousness of one *Tattwa*. He describes particular patterns of the flow of breath through the nostrils, different flavors that we perceive in our mouth....

Here, we are talking of the external role of the *Chakras* – the aspect of the *Chakras* which is not directed in a higher way towards the Spirit but is directed towards the physical world and therefore towards our material body.

Of course, it is difficult to perceive the essence of the five elements; it is a procedure that even in the esoteric literature is rarely and cautiously mentioned. I am obviously talking about the best esoteric schools, those whose aim is to gain pure knowledge and not to explore the powers, the potentialities of the mind.

In serious esoteric paths, a practice similar to our *Second Kriya* is introduced among the final techniques that aim at freeing the students from the identification with the 5 elements or rather with the physical world. As many readers know, in such schools we find the revelation of symbols, images on which to focus ... PY explains that these symbols (square, moon in the nascent phase, triangle...) are revealed spontaneously through meditation upon the *Chakras*.

All this must be said because a *kriyaban* loves (and has all the rights) to understand with the mind, with his reason. But what we do then is just perform (with a breath that almost doesn't exist) the few instructions we received in the correspondence course.

Chronicle

I learned various characteristics of the procedure of *Second Kriya* from Swami Hariharananda's school who had for several years his residence in Karar Ashram (belonging to Sri Yukteswar.) It's not up to me to say anything about his behavior, I can only bow to what he kindly accepted to share with me.

The first concept that he put in my mind is the concept that the right form of *Kriya Pranayama* is that in which you can listen to the inner sounds while you are performing it, without closing your ears. Normally, according to the correspondence course, we are used to perceiving them by applying the *Om meditation technique*.

All this was usually explained by him (Swamiji left his body in 2002) while imparting initiation to *First Kriya*.

As for his *Second Kriya*, it was based on stimulating the *Chakras* either using *Pranayama* or using a method very similar to that of PY's. His *Third Kriya* instead took place in the upper part of the brain.

He said he had learned *Second Kriya* from PY. I think this is possible and I believe that Sri Yukteswar also practiced similar procedures (having learned them from the *Radhasoami* movement) and taught it to his disciples.¹⁵

What I find interesting is that in this method one starts from a fragmented breath (a breath in which there is a micro pause in each *Chakra*); when one holds the breath at the end of inhalation, the head bends in the four directions allowing the Divine force to flow down from above in the 4 regions where one can divide their head.

He explained that this way the head was perceived as separated from the body and a region was created in the upper part of the brain where the remaining *Higher Kriyas* could take place. I know that this fact is powerful and gives you real experiences where your consciousness seems to travel freely in the astral worlds.

In my opinion, a serious lack in his *Kriyas* was the work on the knot of the

¹⁵ He applied the essence of them at the time of his death. He moved through the spinal tunnel a last time, mentally placing the syllable Om in each Chakra, climbing up to Kutastha and then entering the Kutastha.

heart, which instead takes place magnificently in PY's *Third* and *Fourth Kriyas*.

It is correct to point out that the practice of the *Second Kriya* provides for various degrees of deepening of the process of meditation on the *Chakras*. Everything is deepened also including the use of all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet; Swami Hariharananda took the decision to teach a typical practice of *Tantric Hatha Yoga* to complete the practice of his *Second Kriya*.

The letters are utilized on the petals of the *Chakras* and on the various parts in which the human body can be divided; in this process the heart *Chakra* is involved as well: and it is by recalling this fact that he explained the reason why he believed that the practice of *Thokar* could be considered unnecessary.

What can we reasonably expect from this practice

It turns out to be a fantastic plan to practice PY's *Second Kriya* every day, once a day, at least for one year. To those who take this practice seriously, a universe of subtle experiences is revealed.

Some "strong" experiences happen in the spine, especially if one stretches out immediately after the practice. Each "experience" gives such an intensity of devotion that one is surprised to discover it in his own life.

The *First* and the *Second Kriya* tend to merge together, or rather, the revelations that normally take place with *Second Kriya*, now tend to take place during *Kriya Pranayama*. The *Om* sound can be heard during proper *Kriya proper* without closing the ears! This is a blissful experience. You won't wonder if your *Kriya* is correct or not. You know that it's perfect.

Being in tune with the *Om* vibration, a sense of vastness pervades our consciousness. The *Om* vibration will take on a slightly different tone in each *Chakra*. *Kriya Pranayama* then gives the feeling of flying through different regions of an inner sky.

Repeating in this way 108 *Kriya* breaths leads to *Samadhi*. The habit of *Japa* (*Devotional Prayer*) makes love one's heart pure: it's not emotional hysteria, it is a pure love that finds stability in the soul because it is not almost instantaneously interrupted by the agitation of the mind. *Samadhi* state needs the realization of this condition to happen.